NEA Today
The Magazine of [illegible]ication Association
February 2001

Reaching Older Readers

Greg Kurek helps students read for understanding. see page 8

NEA Today

february 2001

Volume 19 • Number 5

Lyle Lauth

COVER STORY

page 8

Reaching Older Readers

A few years ago, Kim Stoepker was struggling to comprehend what she was reading. Her teacher Greg Kurek worked with her to develop her comprehension skills. Now, in her senior year, Stoepker has just completed training to become a certified firefighter.

Cover photo by Lyle Lauth

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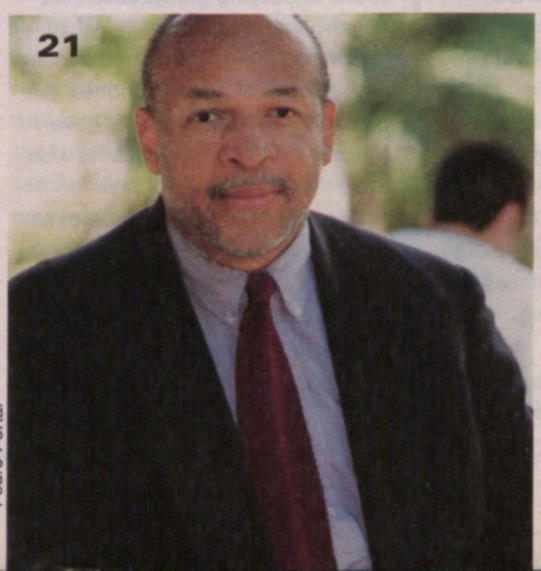

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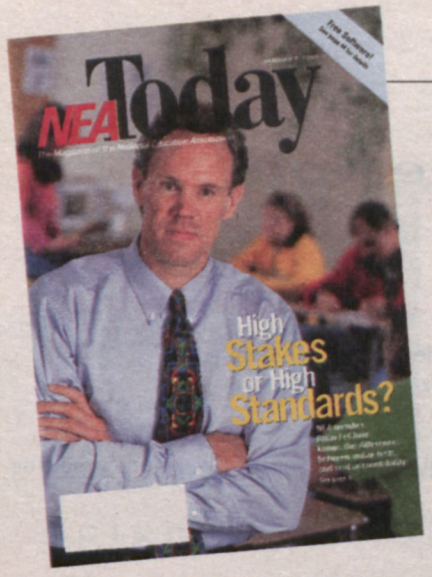
Letters



HIGH-STAKES TESTS

Finally, NEA is speaking out against high-stakes testing (cover story, January).

At the last Representative Assembly, delegates had the opportunity to vote on a proposal to work to ban high-stakes testing. Instead, that item was sent to a committee.

Teachers, it is time for all of us, with NEA's help, to rise up in defiance of these tests.

We need no more committees to study them. We know the negative effects they have on our students and on pedagogy. It is time to decry the ranking and tracking of our students under the guise of accountability and education reform.

It is time for all of us NEA members to tell the emperors they are wearing no clothes!

Maggie Hagan
Youngstown, Ohio

I am writing in response to November's Debate, "Should Special Needs Students Be Exempt from Graduation Tests?"

As a special educator, I believe we need to look beyond this question to recognize the entire population of students who are punished by high-stakes testing.

One of the greatest assets of our educational system is that we provide an education for everyone. Our country was founded on the principle that anyone with enough willpower can succeed. Who is failing these exams? Students from disadvantaged backgrounds. This testing will only increase the ever-widening gap between rich and poor.

We need to solve this problem before we create a population of dropouts who have few prospects for the future.

Leah Wasburn-Moses
Lafayette, Indiana

I want to thank the *NEA Today* staff and NEA leaders for their efforts to save education from the "test them and they will learn" forces.

I also want to thank Senator Paul Wellstone of Minnesota and Representative Robert C. Scott of Virginia who introduced Senate and House versions of a bill "to provide for fairness and accuracy in testing" in the last Congress.

Word is that Wellstone and Scott plan to introduce these bills again in the next Congress. I hope NEA members urge Senators and Representatives to support them. Contact information can be obtained at www.senate.gov/contacting/ and www.house.gov/writerep/.

Brad MacGowan
Chelmsford, Massachusetts

IRRESPONSIBLE PARENTS?

I agree with LeAnn Traylor (Letters, January) that parents don't *appear* to show responsibility. However, while many of us live in an age of cell phones, pagers, and E-mail, there are also many who don't.

I teach in a rural area of the Deep South. I have kept kids at school with high fevers, bleeding injuries, and crawling lice on their heads, because there was no way to reach an adult.

These parents are too poor to have phones. They don't own vehicles. It is frustrating not to be able to reach someone, but I imagine it's just as frustrating for the parents who can't be reached.

I have seen kids miss more than 25 days of school a year because their parents couldn't afford medical treatment for their child.

At my school, we aren't doormats for irresponsible parents. We are their only hope. We do things like collect money to buy lice shampoo and deliver it to their homes.

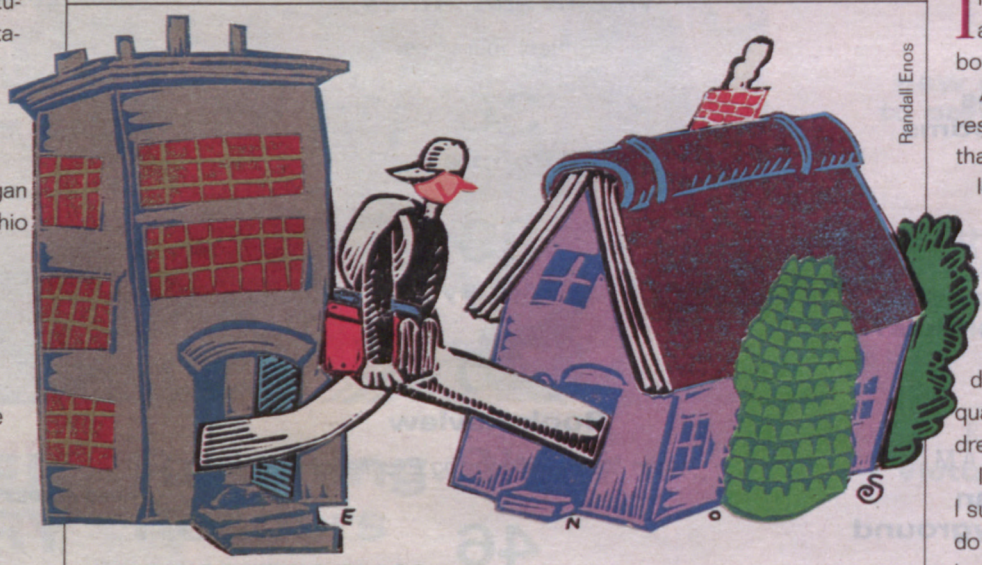
If we don't help these people, we are all losers!

Jennifer Bergeron
Houma, Louisiana

PAPERWORK

Why do language arts teachers feel they are the only ones who grade lengthy assignments (letter on "Taming the Tiger," January)? I will match the time needed to grade my students' science projects to any English research paper. All dedicated teachers spend hours fulfilling paperwork demands. Like special education teachers, we have great, "unpaid" demands on our time. Prep time should stop being taken up by meetings, or it should be increased so teachers can do the other half of their job.

Skyleen Willingham
Okmulgee, Oklahoma



Randall Enos

READING DURING CLASS

I am disturbed that a high school teacher would suggest burning 20 minutes of class time a day (My Turn, January). In a 40- or 45-minute class, a teacher whose students read silently for 20 minutes is a teacher doing half the work. An English teacher's job is to create opportunities for learning, not to babysit.

Saying "They won't read" is simply an excuse. When I taught special needs some years ago, none of my students had ever read a book from cover to cover before we began *Catcher in the Rye*. I told them that if they were ever going to read a book, this was the one. We read one chapter a night, and they had a basic true-and-false quiz the next day. "If you read, you will get five out of five," I announced.

I found one or two passages a day that I knew kids would have a lot to say about, and created engaging activities for them (never lectures). An anonymous survey revealed that nearly everyone read nearly all of the book.

Today's kids are not stupid. Let them create a Web site for a book. Let them bring in songs that relate to themes in the reading. Let them rewrite and act out scenes from *Hamlet* in their own style and language. Develop reading circles where they can choose their own books and report back. That's teaching.

Watching them read during class is not.

Paul Pineiro
Montgomery, New Jersey

CONNECTICUT SALARIES

Competition for teaching positions among highly qualified candidates is the main reason for increased student achievement in Connecticut ("Where Teacher Quality Pays Off," November).

A law passed in 1986 brought teaching salaries in line with other professions in the state. With this increase came an influx of talented people vying for teaching positions.

But since 1986, teaching salaries have declined significantly. Also in decline is the quality of candidates seeking teaching positions.

Bring up salaries and watch students soar. Continue with the status quo and watch achievement fall. It's just a matter of time.

Beth Anderson
Torrington, Connecticut

HOMOSEXUALITY

I must voice my concerns over the article about Arthur Lipkin's recent book (Innovators, November).

As a public school teacher, my responsibility is to educate students that, despite differences, we must learn to treat everyone with respect and care. However, I am alarmed at the onslaught of material aimed at teachers that screams agenda.

What right do we have to destroy the belief system of many quality families who send their children to public schools?

I am a proud member of the NEA. I support many of its initiatives. But I do not support ridiculing beliefs that I and many of our students' families hold dear.

Denver Daniel
North Ridgeville, Ohio

I agree that just as teachers talk about heterosexual relationships in classes, some time should be spent discussing homosexual relationships as well.

Five to 10 percent of students are gay, lesbian, or bisexual, not to mention that most students have friends, relatives, or neighbors who are.

Both heterosexual and homosexual students need to know there are teachers and other school personnel able and willing to talk about issues relating to homosexuality.

Jaime Lishinski
Virginia, Minnesota

I pray that T. Moore from Alabama (Letters, January) doesn't have any students who are questioning their sexuality. With such a supportive teacher, it's no wonder that teenagers consider ending their lives.

How can this person call herself or himself a teacher and not care about the feelings that their students hear from classmates and peers?

I am proud to be an NEA member and southeast region co-chair of the NEA Gay and Lesbian Caucus. I'm not afraid to tell the nation that NEA respects gay, lesbian, and bisexual students and educators.

Bill Goldman
Nashville, Tennessee

STUDENT GRADERS

Falvo v. Owasso (Rights Watch, November) was correctly decided. I still recall my ninth grade algebra class where students traded papers, marked them, then shouted out the grade their neighbor received. I would be ready to sink through the floor with embarrassment as my neighbor announced my grade.

Certain rude classmates would then make derisive remarks about other students. In addition, students would "adjust" grades of friends or enemies.

It is a conflict of interest for students to grade each other.

NEA should not defend teachers who use peer grading to save taking paperwork home.

Doesn't the teaching profession have a code of ethics covering student confidentiality? If not, NEA should take the lead in developing one.

Karen Edwards
Lorain, Ohio

DISILLUSIONED

The other day, a special education teacher was lamenting how difficult it is to keep track of her 23 students.

I said she should try it seven periods a day with 136 students, including five life-skills, three socially-emotionally disturbed, and up to 10 learning-supports students.

And I am not alone. In my small rural school district, the industrial arts teacher, the chemistry teacher, the Spanish teacher, the French teacher, and the physics teacher all have schedules similar to mine, and we are not even going to talk about the jam-packed elementary teacher's schedule.

(My apologies to anyone I missed, but apparently I never see you so I don't know your schedule.)

After 12 years, I am jaded, disillusioned, and just plain tired.

The intrinsic rewards of teaching are being overwhelmed by the reality of leaders who pay lip service to reform, bash teachers as a campaign strategy, and consistently refuse to pay up for salaries, smaller class sizes, and equitable funding.

Susan Chandler Lemmo
Clearfield, Pennsylvania

PHONICS

Although the NEA Task Force on Reading 2000 drew on the expertise of the International Reading Association and the National Council of English to frame its guidelines for reading instruction, it failed to consider the research of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).

The NICHD has invested more than $80 million during the past 35 years to study reading. Researchers have studied more than 10,000 children and published more than 2,500 articles.

They found that difficulties in decoding are the core of most reading problems. Using context to figure out the pronunciation of an unknown word cannot appreciably offset a deficiency in the ability to decode words.

The NICHD recommends a phonics-intensive curriculum for all children in the primary grades.

Louis Krane
Boynton Beach, Florida

NATIONAL CERTIFICATION

During the last negotiations in my district, I was on the bargaining team and we negotiated a $2,500 bonus for teachers holding certification from the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards.

Unfortunately, some disciplines aren't eligible for this board certification, but some have long-established national certifications that are much more rigorous.

Oklahoma recently approved a bonus for educators holding any national board certification.

My local, state, and national union presidents frequently extol the virtues of NBPTS certification, but make no mention of other professional certifications.

If my union won't be more supportive of national certifications earned by all of its members, then it ought to prorate the $600 or so dues paid annually by its second-class members such as myself.

Mike Kluznik
(National Certified
School Psychologist)
Mendota Heights, Minnesota

President's Viewpoint

BY BOB CHASE

Truth About Seuss

There's more to Read Across America than the Cat and the Hat.

It's been said that if something good happens once, it's a fluke. If it happens twice, it's a coincidence. If it happens three times, it's a bona fide trend.

Which is good news for Read Across America.

Yes, it's ba-a-a-ck, replete with the *Cat in the Hat*, *Sam-I-Am*, and the rest of Dr. Seuss's fantastic creations. Friday, March 2 marks the fourth year that NEA will be celebrating the late Theodor Geisel's birthday with a campaign to read to children. With actor Morgan Freeman signed on as the event's national chair—and hundreds of celebrations being planned—what began as the dream of one teacher in New Jersey is now becoming an American tradition. Red-and-white top hats are being distributed, green eggs and ham are being readied for the griddle, and celebrities are signing up to read *Hop on Pop* to kindergarten children.

But amid this great hoopla, I must express some concern. This past winter, Hollywood released a quasi-blockbuster, *The Grinch*. And as I write this, a Dr. Seuss-inspired musical, *Seussical*, is being primed for Broadway. Dr. Geisel's creations are arguably more popular than ever, nearing Disney-esque stature.

Teacher that I am, I worry that in such a climate, Read Across America will be seen as a celebration of a trademark rather than as a promotion of literacy. I fear that more attention will be paid to the red-and-white top hats than to the gray matter beneath them.

As sponsors of March 2 events, let us remind the world that Dr. Seuss's books are about more than a gleefully subversive feline. They are about the joy of reading—and of teaching reading.

Teacher that I am, I worry that in such a climate, Read Across America will be seen as a celebration of a trademark rather than as a promotion of literacy.

The truth about Seuss is that he was an ingenious and passionate pedagogue. His books were designed to teach children phonics and morals—to help them to read and to excite them about reading at the same time.

Yes, serving green eggs and ham is an inventive way to capture children's attention. But whether Read Across America truly succeeds depends upon whether adults continue to read to children after March 2—and whether children themselves develop an abiding love for books beyond Geisel's.

Thus, we need to emphasize what teachers have known for years: the amount of "laptime" children receive outside the classroom greatly impacts their learning inside the classroom.

We need to promote literacy in fun and engaging ways year-round. For inspiration, we might look to Mike Jones, an elementary school principal in Franktown, Colorado. Several evenings each week, Jones visits the homes of his students. Dressed in a Dr. Seuss bathrobe and puppy slippers, he reads children bedtime stories before returning home to read to his own kids. Doing this, he says, makes children value reading outside of school; it also models good "literacy behavior" for parents.

While it's impossible logistically for many of us to do this, we must (excuse the teacherly pun) promote the greater principle behind it—that adults can and must be the principal readers in a child's life.

So let me close with a message for this March 2:

Reading to children
helps open their eyes
to a skill and a joy
that will last all their lives.
So read every day!
Get your kids juiced,
for a lifetime of learning,
beyond Dr. Seuss!

Comments? E-mail Bob Chase at BobChase@nea.org.

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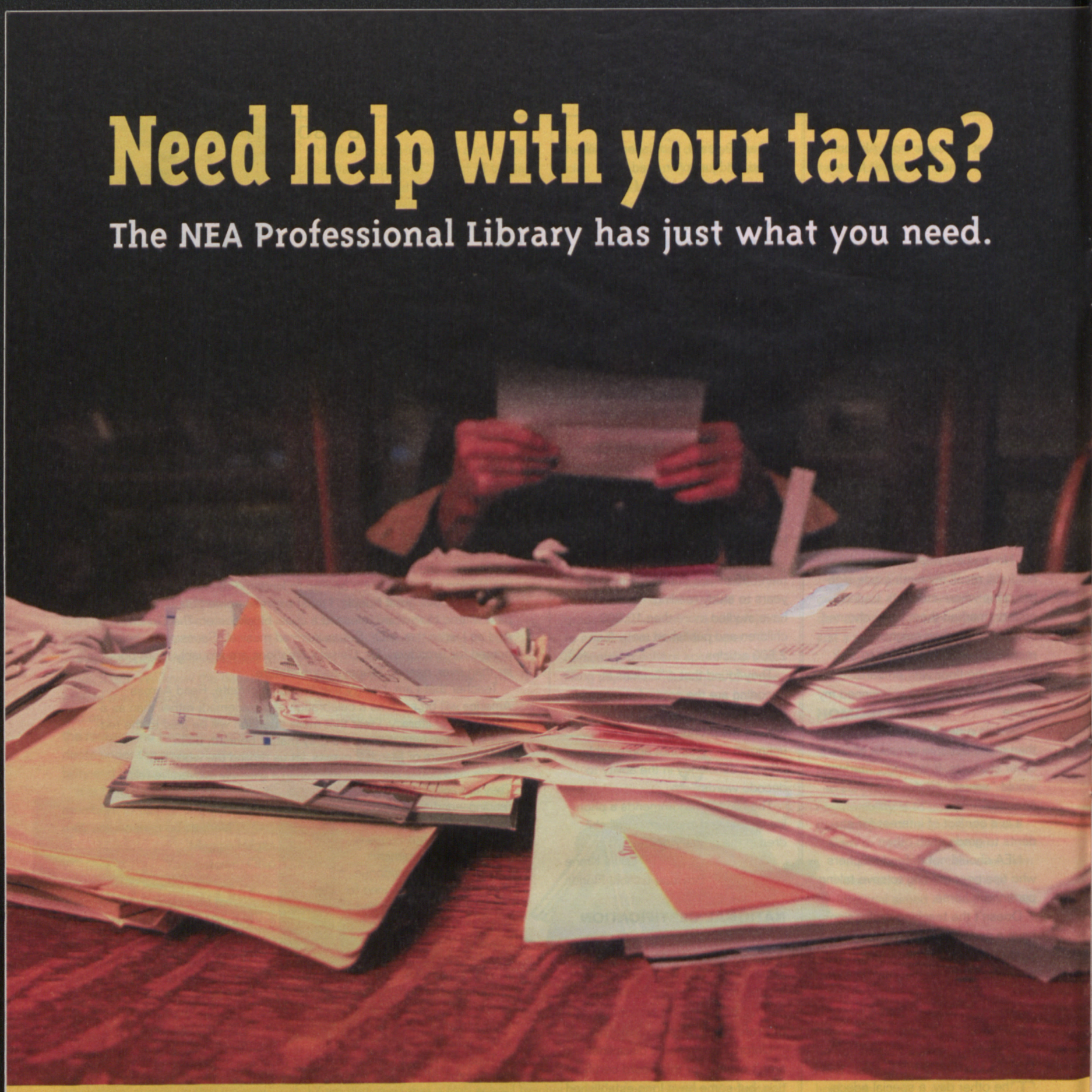

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'The Orlando Odyssey'

This teacher has a set of rules for parents who take their kids out of school for vacations.

BY PHYLLIS LEWIS

After a 10-year hiatus from teaching, I recently returned to the classroom to discover an interesting phenomenon: parents and their children taking extended vacations during the school year.

I call this all-too-common trend the "Orlando Odyssey," or "OO" for short. And, each year, the requests for time off increase.

Today, 180 days of learning are reduced by 10 percent or more via absenteeism, field days, trips to the doctor, holiday plays, and now, "OO." It's not unusual for a child to bring in a note that reads, "Alyssa will be out the next three weeks as we travel to Orlando to see Mickey. During this time, she will partake in numerous educational activities that include discovery, geometry, literature, and history. Please have three weeks worth of homework ready for her by tomorrow."

To my dismay, but not my surprise, I've come to learn that "discovery" is euphemistic for trying to discover the shortest entrance to the "Honey I Shrunk the Audience" exhibit at Epcot, "geometry" means judging the shapes on the plate during Breakfast with Pluto, "literature" is actually reading comic books in the rental car en route to Sea World, and "history" simply refers to glancing at the date the city was founded on the sign that welcomes visitors.

When I dare to inquire what these young travelers learned during their time away from the classroom, the answer invariably boils down to, "I can't remember cause my sunburn hurt most of the time." Sure, most come back with homework in hand, but there's reason to believe that the papers were hurriedly completed with much assistance from their parents on the flight home.

During my first few years as an elementary teacher, in the early '80s, such elaborate and elongated vacations were few and far between. I can't recall anyone being legally excused to visit Disney World. Now it's the norm.

Perhaps the robust economy has a lot to do with "OO." Parents are feeling good about their monetary resources and want to travel. Trying to beat the crowds also plays into decisions to visit "It's a Small World" in October. As a result, there's no off-season at the Magic Kingdom anymore.

Neither my school friends nor I ever enjoyed the luxury of today's exotic vacations during the school years. If we weren't feigning an illness, it was off to school for us. People did manage to drive to Atlantic City each summer for three days to see the Steel Pier's Diving Horse. But that was about it.

"OO," unfortunately, may be here to stay. So teachers need to develop sound strategies to cope with, and perhaps deter, 11th hour requests for extended homework assignments and makeup tests. For my first graders, I've implemented the following rules:

- Parents are told during "Meet the Teachers Night" and with notes the first week of school that all requests for "OO" or other vacations must be submitted in writing a week before the scheduled time off. Those that ignore this are not given the assignments and must make up all work during recesses and free time when they return.

Of course, I have bent this rule many times, but it sometimes helps to put on a hard face. Besides, parents need to know that it's often impossible to gather all the necessary homework material on short notice.

- In addition to homework, students are required to keep a daily, illustrated (as precise as possible for six-year-olds) journal of the trip. We share this with the entire class upon return. I encourage parents to assist with this assignment but to let the creativity of their children take precedence over accuracy.
- The students present their experience to the other children by speaking in front of the class. The class then can ask questions of the vacationers on experiences they encountered during their trip. This builds self-esteem and softens the fear of public speaking.
- As part of show and tell, the student can bring in objects from the trip. I'm always amazed at the stories that go with these objects and how excited the other students are to listen.

All teachers know that flexibility plays a major role in their day-to-day responsibilities as educators, and learning to deal with "OO" may be simply another test of our mettle.

Actually, it's nice to see the wide-eyed excitement of children as they relive their "educational" vacations for the rest of the class. ✔

Rich Banik

First-grade teacher Phyllis Lewis feels like she knows most Disney characters personally, because her students bring back so many of them from vacations.

Phyllis Lewis is a first-grade teacher at Academy Street School in the North Pocono School District in Moscow, Pennsylvania.

Most readers have probably never noticed the masthead that appears on the bottom of page 2 of *NEA Today*. It lists most of the key people who are responsible for the publication.

At most publications, the title of publisher is mostly an official one, signifying some combination of editorial and fiduciary responsibilities.

Most publishers I'm aware of don't spend a lot of time on the publication's editorial content, leaving most of the heavy editorial lifting to others.

Bill Fischer
editor

But that's not so for Sam Pizzigati, who's been publisher of this magazine since it was founded 18 years ago.

Sam's been a hands-on publisher, steering it along with a deft hand, attending all story conferences, acting as the main interface with NEA governance, editing and fine-tuning articles, and contributing original writing as well.

It was Sam's idea to fold the old *NEA Reporter*, a newspaper mostly devoted to leader news and political topics, with NEA's *Today's Education*, a monthly magazine, to start a new publication, *NEA Today*.

Sam's leaving the NEA after a 20-year career, to work on some long-delayed writing projects of his own.

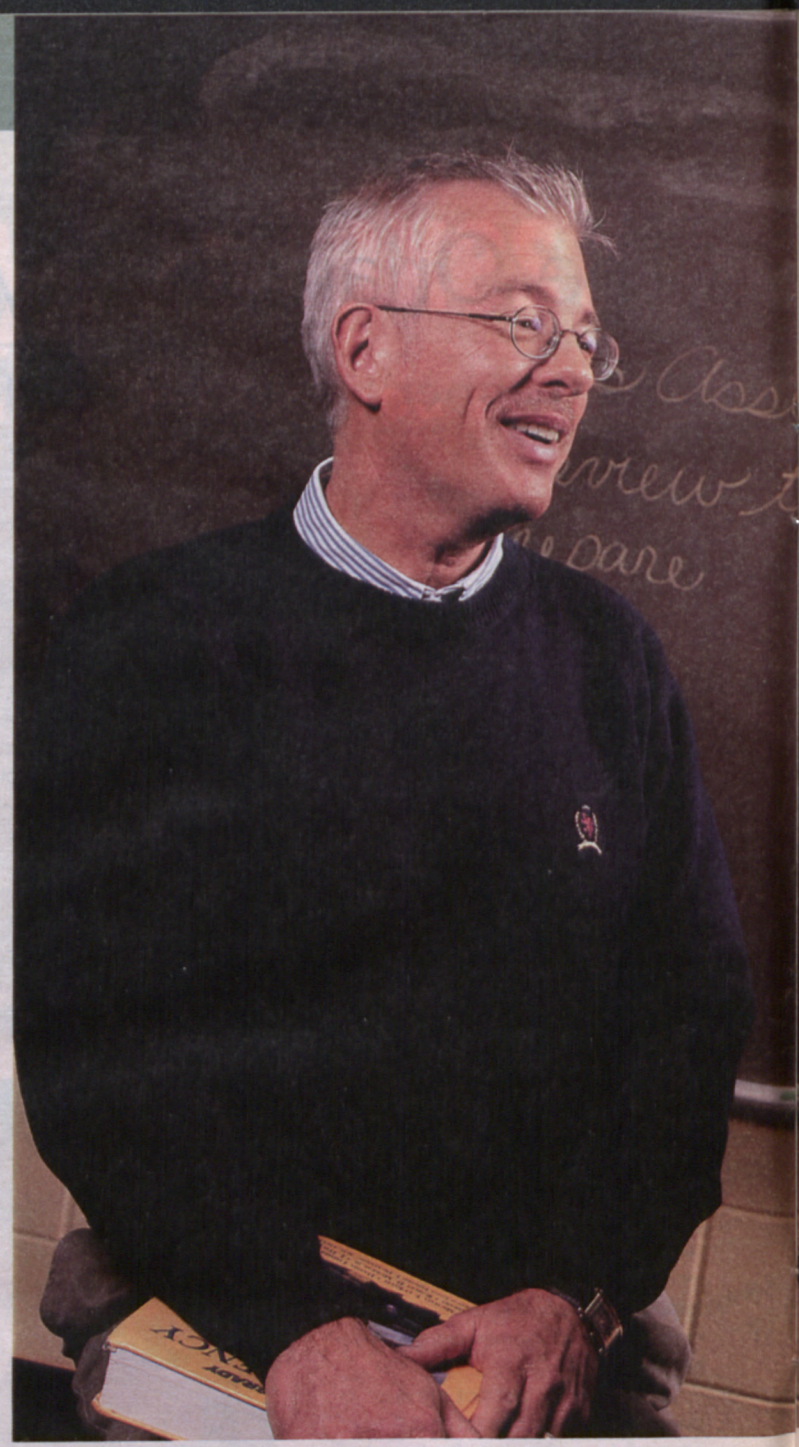
Taking over as publisher of *NEA Today* on an interim basis is NEA Assistant Executive Director Tony Rollins. Leona Hiraoka, currently editor of the Learning section of *NEA Today*, will assume a new editorial management role with responsibility for *NEA Today*, as well as several other NEA membership publications.

Sam's vision, editorial savvy, and low-key style will be missed. We wish him well.

And we pledge to him, but more important to all NEA members, to continue the mission that we began nearly 20 years ago: to put out the best member publication in education and labor journalism.

Bill Fischer

Reaching Older Readers



Michigan teacher Greg Kurek knows that for older students, **reading** means more than sounding out words. It requires an ability to **comprehend** text.

Anyone who's seen firefighter Kim Stoepker leap into action with a hook and ladder is convinced this 12th grader knows her stuff. Yet only a few years ago, Kim lacked the basic reading comprehension skills needed to succeed in Bridgman, Michigan's Reed Middle School, let alone understand the 594-page *Essentials of Firefighting* manual she uses today.

Then, in sixth grade, Michigan language arts teacher Greg Kurek set Kim's reading ablaze with meaning, using strategies aimed at helping older readers process and organize information.

While Kim's turnaround is remarkable, her challenges are not unique.

"Reading comprehension difficulty among older students is a pervasive problem," says Kurek, a member of NEA's Task Force on Reading. "There isn't a teacher alive who hasn't experienced following up on a reading assignment and finding you're talking to a vacant audience. Kids come into class knowing they haven't been successful readers in the past, so they ask themselves, 'Why bother?'"

Kurek's perceptions are backed by a 1998 survey from the National Assessment of Educational Progress showing that although virtually all adolescents are able to carry out simple reading tasks, only 40 percent can read well enough to comfortably manage standard high school texts. And only 6 percent of 17-year-olds read at levels necessary to synthesize specialized reading material.

The problem, simply put, is that while beginning readers must learn to read—that is, learn to decode the written word with speed and accuracy—secondary readers must read to learn. And knowing how to untangle specialized texts to construct meaning does not come automatically.

Kim, for example, had been part of a pull-out program for reading and language arts for years. She could decode text with even a certain degree of fluidity, but she needed help in processing text.

Reading experts note three distinct categories of struggling adolescent readers: students who cannot read; students who read, but not well; and students who read well, but do not study effectively.

The first two categories may require one-on-one or remedial instruction that's beyond the content teacher's ability to address alone. But the third—and largest—category of students, says Kurek, can improve markedly by reinforcing basic reading strategies that center around teaching kids to interact with text. These include:

1) Draw on background knowledge. Let students know your goals for reading right up front—where they're headed and why—so they can continually assess their roles as readers.

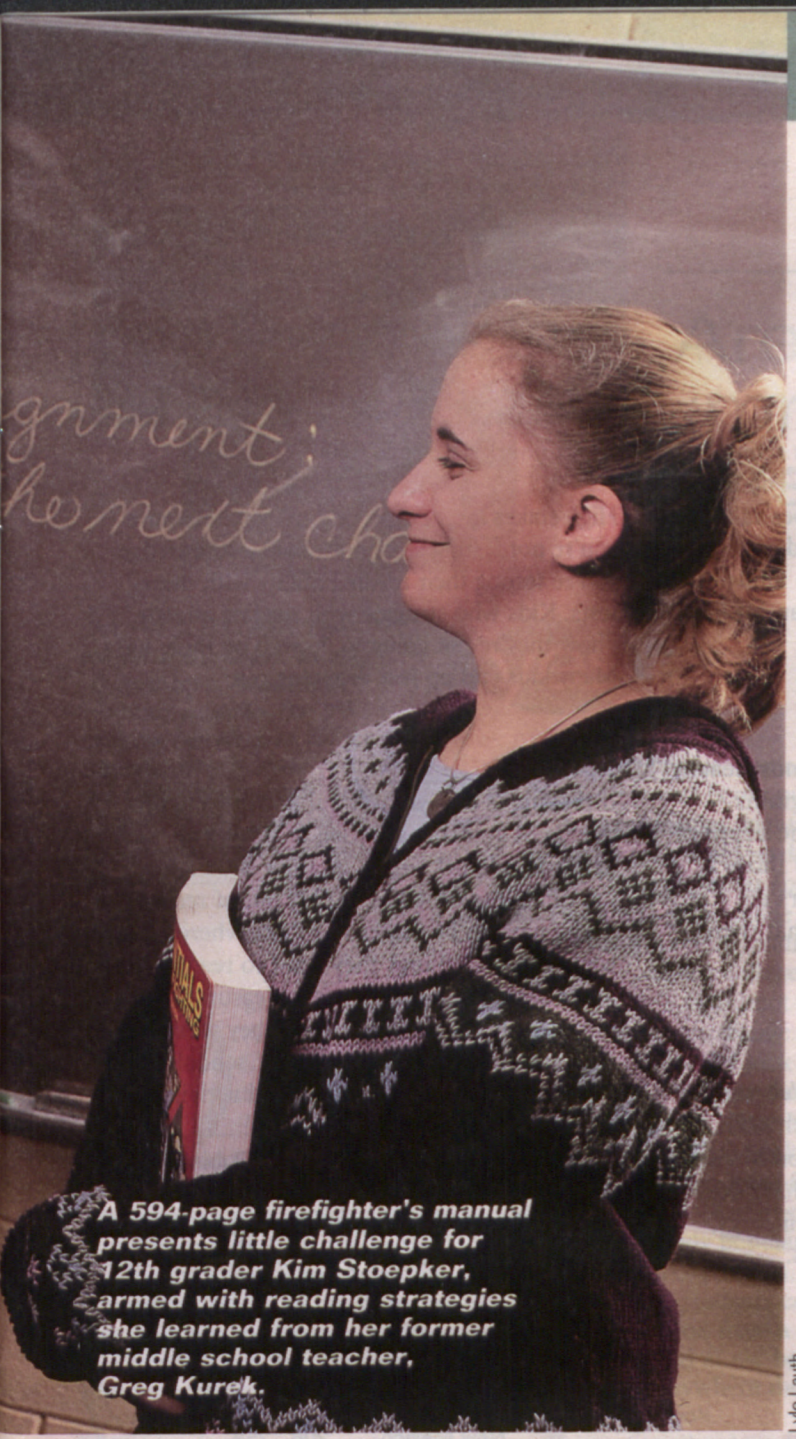
2) Talk about the reading process. Stress that reading is a three-step process of constructing meaning. As readers they need to know how to connect and focus, select and organize information, and integrate and apply what they've learned.

3) Remember K-W-L. Ask "What do you **K**now about the topic?"; "What do you **W**ant to know?"; "What have you **L**earned?" Model this technique as a class on a blackboard or overhead. Then have students create a personal grid to record their answers as they read along in the text.

4) Read aloud—think aloud. Read aloud a difficult portion of text while they follow along. Think aloud in a way that models how to improve lagging comprehension: making predictions, describing mental images, drawing analogies, and verbalizing confusing points.

5) Organize notetaking. Get students thinking about how to take notes for any assignment. Promote the use of keywords, marginal symbols, note cards, learning logs, flow charts, sticky tags, and highlighters to mark materials as they read along. Tell them it's worth the effort because they won't have to reread the entire text to review.

6) Use QAR. Question, Answer, Relationship. Teach students to recognize how to find the answer by considering the type of question. Is the question very specific, something that can be answered by a single word or sentence? Will it take a



A 594-page firefighter's manual presents little challenge for 12th grader Kim Stoepker, armed with reading strategies she learned from her former middle school teacher, Greg Kurek.

Lyle Lauth

paragraph? Or do I have to think about this on my own?

7) Use cooperative groups. Have students read silently in groups, then summarize each paragraph with a sentence. Next, have them discuss and compile a group summary. Discuss group summaries as a class. This technique slows students down to think about reading and ties in other skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

8) Get them moving. Do charting and mapping. Seat them on the floor. Cut apart diagrams and reassemble. Allow them to use the board or the overhead. Let them draw what they've read.

9) Allow reading from choice. Let students self-select books they want to read, and have them use a reading log to record them.

10) Keep it up. Tell students these strategies don't just pertain to kids. They're what successful readers do for a lifetime.

Taking time to share such strategies with older students has a noticeable payoff, says Kurek, now a district reading consultant and an International Reading Association board member.

"When you empower kids with ways for working in informational expository text, you really change the quality of what's going on in the classroom. You gain deeper content knowledge, build relationships, and help students acquire a quest for lifelong learning."

And of his former student Kim, who last year became the first female firefighter in Bridgman, Michigan, Kurek says, "When Kim gets to talking about her topic, it's really amazing what she knows. She found that reading didn't control her. She controlled reading." ✔

—Michelle Y. Green

For more: E-mail Kurek at geogreg@wmol.com. Find more strategies at www.nea.org/readingmatters/class/index.html.

Kindling a Love of Reading

Teaching kids to read is one thing. Getting them excited about reading is another. NEA members across the country have found ways to spark the interest of reluctant older readers with a variety of fun reading activities you can adapt for a Read Across America event on March 2 or throughout the year.

■ In Massachusetts, the Natick High School library will again be transformed into a bookstore–café to celebrate Read Across America. "Read-A-Latte" invites students to browse book displays, listen to music, sip a cappuccino, and chat with their friends about books they've enjoyed. A steaming success with students last year, the project calls on the talents of the English, art, cooking, and music departments and parents who volunteer as servers for the two-day event.

■ NEA and Youth Service America announce the Youth Leaders for Literacy program to encourage literacy service and honor youth involved in reading-related activities that benefit others. The seven-week program—which begins on Read Across America Day, March 2, and runs through National Youth Service Day, April 21—awards prizes to youth leaders who develop model literacy projects. To be eligible for prizes, service projects must have some kind of activity, such as a read-aloud session, a trip to the library, or book making, scheduled each week of the seven-week project period. Visit SERVEnet at www.servenet.org or NEA's Read Across America site, www.nea.org/readacross.

■ Students in the Mt. Carmel School District in Pennsylvania will be showing off their knowledge of books read in a school-wide "Who Wants To Be a Millionaire Reader?" event. Each grade level will conduct its own show, with winners being designated "Millionaire Readers." The district's TV crew will video the game show for airing on the local school station.

■ Drama students from Kentucky's Madisonville North Hopkins, attired in appropriate Cat-gear constructed by the school's fashion design class, will board the big yellow bus to read in nearly every classroom in Hopkins County.

■ Students at Forked River School, New Jersey, will compete in a Battle of the Books. Teams of students must answer student- and parent-generated questions about books they've read on their own. The three-round competition begins in February, with the final three teams going "book to book" on Read Across America Day.

■ Eisenhower High School students in family and consumer sciences classes and Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America will plan, prepare, and present a wide assortment of Seussian activities for several Houston, Texas, community child care facilities.

More activities for older readers are being added to the Read Across America Web site every day. Visit www.nea.org/readacross.

Tiffany Bachelder

Students at Natick High School in Massachusetts enjoy good books, good friends, and a cuppa cappuccino during the Read-A-Latte event for Read Across America.

Q&A

On Reading To Learn

The reading wars of the last decade sparked intense debate on best methods for teaching beginning readers. But what about the particular needs of older students who have learned to read, but still struggle with reading to learn? Cathy Roller, Director of Research and Policy for the International Reading Association, discusses adolescent reading.

Why the sudden focus on adolescent literacy?
These things go in cycles. In the 1980s there was a focus on intermediate and upper grades and comprehension, but that followed an intensive period of beginning reading and reading methods discussions. What happens is that resources get shifted. Very often people underestimate the difficulty in moving from learning to read to reading to learn.

How is reading different for older students?
Students don't automatically understand what they're reading just because they know how to say all the words on the page. This is particularly true when they start reading complicated, expository formats they haven't encountered before. The more kids struggle, the more you begin to get a chorus rising, and that's what you're seeing now. The lesson we have to learn is that it really does take good reading instruction from Kindergarten through 12th grade to produce the kinds of sophisticated readers we need for an information society.

Are today's teachers prepared for that challenge?
The information is available, and most teachers going through preparation programs encounter it. But many don't get the depth of information they need, particularly those at the secondary level. Many educators are unaware of the reading demands that their fields place on children.

Does technology act as a disincentive to read for older students?
You can't really navigate with the Web without very sophisticated reading and search skills. While there may be some information in visual form, you can't get to it unless you have very developed literacy skills. To use technology, students need more literacy, not less.

International Reading Association

What challenges do increased testing in schools place on struggling readers?
High-stakes tests exacerbate the issue because you're not testing students' content knowledge, you're testing their reading ability with these tests. Kids who struggle with reading already know they're not going to do well on these tests. Many kids end up just dropping out.

How can educators motivate reluctant readers?
If reading is always stressful and anxiety producing, if students are used to having an "academic regulator" sitting on their shoulder all the time, it takes all of the joy out of reading. There have to be places in school where adolescents can read things they want to read. If they never experience reading as a pleasurable and intrinsically rewarding activity, they won't have any reason for reading outside of school. Reading for fun has to be a sanctioned activity. ✔

For more: Contact Cathy Roller at Pubinfo@reading.org. To learn more about the International Reading Association's adolescent reading initiatives, visit.ira.org/focus/adolescent.html.

Resources

- Watch out for *Word Power: What Every Educator Needs To Know about Teaching Vocabulary*. Coming in June 2001, this NEA Professional Library book offers K-12 teachers proven techniques for effective vocabulary instruction throughout the content areas. www.nea.org/books

- A new report from the Learning First Alliance, "Every Child Reading: A Professional Development Guide," shows that educators now agree on critical factors, such as comprehension and phonics, in teaching children to read. NEA is one of 12 permanent partners of the Alliance. Read the executive summary on the Reading Matters website. www.nea.org/readingmatters/news/

- The International Reading Association lists new books that young adults named as their favorites and the new titles that teachers recommend in its "Teachers' Choices, Young Adults' Choices for 2000." These annotated booklists are available for download at www.ira.org.

- ALA's *Guide to Best Reading 2000* is a camera-ready kit that contains bookmarks and brochures of ALA's annual lists of award-winning books for children, young adults, and adults, including a new list of "Outstanding Books for the College Bound." The kit shows how to set up your own "Best Books" contest. 88 pp., $29.95. Visit www.ala.org/rusa/notable_guide.html or call 800/545-2433 and press 7 to order.

- The National Council of Teachers of English interactive Web site allows you to exchange strategies with other educators and access information about grants, professional development, and standards. Visit www.ncte.org/

Average Reading Scale Scores

	4th grade	8th grade
For the nation	215	261
Alabama	211	255
Arizona	207	261
Arkansas	209	256
California	202	253
Colorado	222	264
Connecticut	232	272
Delaware	212	256
District of Columbia	182	236
Florida	207	253
Georgia	210	257
Hawaii	200	250
Iowa	223	n/a
Kansas	222	268
Kentucky	218	262
Louisiana	204	252
Maine	225	273
Maryland	215	262
Massachusetts	225	269
Michigan	217	n/a
Minnesota	222	267
Mississippi	204	251
Missouri	216	263
Montana	226	270
Nevada	208	257
New Hampshire	226	n/a
New Mexico	206	258
New York	216	266
North Carolina	217	264
Oklahoma	220	265
Oregon	214	266
Rhode Island	218	262
South Carolina	210	255
Tennessee	212	259
Texas	217	262
Utah	215	265
Virginia	218	266
Washington	217	265
West Virginia	216	262
Wisconsin	224	266
Wyoming	219	262

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998 Reading Assessments. Note: NAEP scores are based on a scale from 0 - 500. The national score indicates that, on average, the country is reading at a "basic" level. N/a indicates the jurisdiction did not participate in voluntary reporting.

Are Assigned Summer Reading Lists Obsolete?

NORMA GLOCK *has been a librarian in the Columbus, Montana, school system for 14 years, serving at all grade levels. She's now working at Columbus High School. Glock is the president of the Columbus Education Association.*

yes

Don't get me wrong. As a high school librarian in a small rural town in Montana, I am not opposed to summer reading. It's my job to recommend books to students, whether in the summer or during the school year.

My opposition is to circulating a pre-selected list of books for an age or grade level.

I recently searched the Web on summer reading lists for 11th and 12th graders. The first hit came up with a list that featured a book that one seventh grader in my school enjoyed this year.

There are just too many diverse interests, too many books, and too many different formats to even suggest a summer reading list that's right for one group.

Too Many Diverse Interests

"Every book, its reader." That's an old law of library science. It is presumptuous on our part to say that a list of 10, 50, or even 500 books would satisfy the many different interests students have.

And, as my first Web hit above showed, when we start dividing the assigned lists into age groups, we are missing the boat.

One example: I have not seen a summer reading list for high schoolers that recommends any picture books. Summertime should be a time of relaxation. Why not have lists of picture books for 12th graders to read in the summertime?

Too Many Books

The reading lists I've examined on the Web are generally books from well-known publishing houses, and were compiled from "Best Books" or award book lists. Some very good literature published by small independent presses never makes it to these lists and are not, as a result, ever hyped to schools or libraries. Some of the "special interest" books published by these companies might be just the books for certain readers.

Too Many Different Formats

The Internet has made the notion of a summer reading list obsolete, said one college professor in 1995. I would not be so quick to place the blame on the Internet, but a brief look at *Publishers Weekly* for November 20 showed that 35 percent of the articles dealt with e-books, a format that is getting lots of attention from the book industry.

With the newly popular handheld personal organizers, such as the PalmPilot, students can download a book from a virtual library and read at the beach, in the bath, or anywhere they could read a print book.

This new technology has attractive interactive features. Many e-books are not available in print. They are virtually (pun intended) ignored on summer reading lists.

I know there's opposition to suggesting students watch TV or videos, but there are some excellent programs on TV and some well-produced videos on the market. Some students may prefer these formats. Perhaps we should assign summer "viewing lists." That makes as much sense to me as a "reading list."

If schools have done a good job teaching critical thinking skills, they should allow students to choose from the myriad of books they find in the local library and bookstores, or exchange books with friends. These are better alternatives than assigned summer reading lists. ✔

MIKE BACON *has taught English for 23 years at East Kentwood High School in Kentwood, Michigan. This year, he's enjoying teaching a new class in video production. Bacon is the secretary of the Kentwood Education Association.*

no

This question is part of the larger debate on process versus product, which in teaching has become a debate over whether to teach thinking and problem-solving (process), or content such as physics and literature (product). Obviously, the debate has not been won; it continues. The synergy between the two sides probably fuels the controversy.

On one side, we have those who claim that reading lists should not be used because they are not useful or meaningful. These people say teachers should simply wait for students to come into contact with books and, through some serendipitous process, find just the right book to read. They also seem to suggest that books seek out readers, as if these pages of print have an urge to communicate.

We are led to believe that books should be experienced promiscuously, encountered at random, read at one's leisure, and left behind as readers seek out their next encounter. In this position, books take on a nondescript identity, displaying nothing more important than their immediate availability and attraction.

On the other side, we have those who claim that reading lists are absolutely essential guides to the canon of literature that must be read for one to be considered an educated person. In this view, teachers provide the list of books to be read and insist that only these books are worth reading.

This position resembles an arranged marriage between a bride and groom who never meet before the wedding ceremony.

Readers are expected to learn specific knowledge from a specific source, and that knowledge would be considered their education. We can imagine the most devastating and narrow-minded list—one with just one title.

However, good teachers know that they must maintain a balanced approach for their myriad students.

Writers are the observers, the recorders, and the interpreters of being human, and some are better than others. Teachers should provide a summer list to begin the learning and then encourage their students to search out more information from movies, television, radio, and CDs, as well as comic books, magazines, newspapers, and more.

Good teachers recognize that there is a canon of literature containing some of the best and most profound expressions of thought, and that these readings can be supplemented by additional readings.

Most of us maintain reading lists all the time. We use them to guide our reading and to purchase books as gifts for others.

We should realize that a hit-or-miss approach to reading can be fun and exciting, but we should also realize that a guided list for reading can be more productive.

With our curriculum and high stakes tests, educators must rely on a balanced, focused approach. Summer reading lists are not obsolete. They are essential.

But the debate between process and product, for and against summer reading lists, will continue, and thank goodness.

We couldn't become educated by following just one of the extremes. Learning would not be interesting. ✔

What's Your Opinion?

Are Assigned Summer Reading Lists Obsolete?
To vote, visit our Web site at www.nea.org/neatoday and see the results instantly.

Does Prepping for High-Stakes Tests Interfere with Teaching?
The tally on this Debate question from the last issue of *NEA Today:*
90% Yes **10% No**

Double-Digit Raises From Coast to Coast?

NEA state affiliates are teaching politicians that quality education and educator pay go hand in hand.

New Jersey NEA members, like these teachers in Southampton Township, are boosting educator pay through tough bargaining.

In contract talks last summer, teacher members of the Absecon (New Jersey) Education Association refused to settle early on some "nice numbers" until the district *first* met the needs of educational support personnel.

That teacher-ESP solidarity yielded a new agreement that reinstates dependent health coverage for non-tenured teachers and provides double-digit pay increases for everybody over three years, including 19.5 percent for teachers, 19.18 percent for custodians, and 35.24 percent for teacher aides.

A continent away, many members of the California Teachers Association began the new school year with double-digit raises for just 2000-01 alone—including 11.9 percent in Huntington Beach, 12.9 percent in San Leandro, and 13.95 percent in Oakland.

In the Alvord Unified School District, the president of the NEA local affiliate, Leigh Hawkinson, says her members' raises—from 5.5 percent for beginning teachers to 12.6 percent for veterans—will help stem the flight of staffers to other districts and dot.com companies.

"Some teachers can't afford to live here, even if they're renting," she laments.

From coast to coast, elected officials—many of whom ran vowing to help improve public education—are coming to realize that lagging salaries are making it hard to attract and keep the high-quality educators all kids deserve.

This year, elected officials have a great opportunity to address this inequity, thanks to both record budget surpluses and strong voter support for public schools.

In this new climate, NEA state affiliates are setting some ambitious compensation goals, from double-digit increases in California to a $40,000 minimum teacher salary in Massachusetts and New Jersey.

It'll take hard work in the months ahead to reach objectives like these. But reports from around the nation indicate these promising action options:

Comprehensive statewide campaigns. Through a year-long drive—involving everything from media outreach to a proposed ballot initiative to raise education spending to the national average—the **California Teachers Association** hammered home the point that this mega-state had slipped to 40th place in per-pupil spending. The crowning campaign moment: a 10,000-teacher rally on the state capitol steps last May.

The upshot: Governor Gray Davis has announced that an additional $1.84 billion would be sent to the local level.

These new monies are now helping districts pay for double-digit teacher raises. Moreover, California's new budget allocates another $55 million to expand the state's minimum teacher salary program and $218 million to fund a teacher tax credit.

Meanwhile, through extensive research, bipartisan political action, and the combined lobbying power of teachers and ESP, the **Alabama Education Association** won legislation last year that will, starting October 2001, dedicate 41 percent of the annual growth in the state's Education Trust Fund to teacher raises, until Alabama hits the national average.

> **"Model schools should have strong, professional, and competitive salaries."**
>
> —Bob Willoughby, Associate Director for Research, New Jersey Education Association

This kind of success has inspired NEA members in South Carolina.

"We've been setting the stage for two years to make a major push toward the national average," reports Mary Greene, a staffer for **The South Carolina Education Association**. "Our governor has finally come out in favor of the plan, as have many state House and Senate leaders."

Over in Oklahoma, the NEA state affiliate, revved up by a $3,000 teacher raise it won last year after a 30,000-person rally, is now planning a campaign to move teacher salaries to the top of the region. That'll require, says the **Oklahoma Education Association**, $80 million a year over four years.

And, in Wyoming, the NEA affiliate, the **Wyoming Education Association,** is collaborating with school officials to address the state's teacher shortage to "significantly" increase salaries. The estimated price tag: $73 million.

Aggressive bargaining. After studying average teacher salaries and polling educators who've left the profession, the **New Jersey Education Association** produced "common" goals for local affiliate bargainers and distributed some 200,000 copies across the state. Among the goals: teacher raises of 5 percent or higher, with greater percentage increases for ESP, along with quick movement to top salary and a $40,000 teacher minimum.

"Our average teacher salary ranked 15th nationally in 1981, and it ranks first today, at $52,100," notes NJEA staffer Bob Willoughby. "We got there through aggressive, coordinated bargaining, and not being afraid to walk the picket line when necessary."

In nearby Maryland, the NEA state affiliate, working with Governor Parris Glendening, recently won legislation that reinforces collective bargaining.

The new law's basic approach: If a school district and its union negotiate a minimum salary increase of 4 percent a year over two years, the state will kick in another 1 percent a year.

Many districts, says the **Maryland State Teachers Association,** have already taken advantage of this innovative statute.

Reaching directly to the public. After a long campaign—with everything from rallies to rolling school employee walkouts—the **Washington Education Association** last November won passage of a ballot initiative to provide annual cost-of-living raises for school district employees, academic employees of com-

NJEA Photos

munity and technical colleges, and certain technical college support staffers.

But WEA staffer Dale Folkerts stresses that there's much more work to be done on the pay issue.

"We're now seeking an additional catch-up and an urban housing allowance," he reports.

Last November, the **Arizona Education Association** teamed up with Republican Governor Jane Hull, the Republican state school superintendent, and legislators from both parties to win voter approval of a 0.6 percent sales tax increase that will raise some $445 million a year for public education.

Southampton Township Education Association members stage an overnight vigil to win a new contract.

Some $157 million of that money will be allocated for teacher raises.

"Our challenge now," says AEA President Penny Kotterman, "is to implement this program quickly and fairly."

Working behind the scenes. Six **Nebraska State Education Association** members recently served on a state Teacher Salary Task Force, which has produced recommendations for making teacher pay "regionally competitive."

The panel's report, now in the hands of legislators, calls for a state-funded salary supplement for every teacher, an annual stipend for National Board-certified teachers, a college loan forgiveness plan, a mentoring program for all new educators, and extended contract pay.

The **North Dakota Education Association**, for its part, is now backing Governor John Hoeven's proposed solutions for the state's teacher retention and recruitment problem—including an immediate $3,500 increase for every teacher over the next biennium and a loan forgiveness program for new educators who accept hard-to-fill positions.

Pushing the envelope. Other NEA affiliates are working creatively to attract and keep educators in the profession. Several **Massachusetts Teachers Association** locals are now negotiating contract language that would provide partial or total payment for required advanced degree work, while the **Michigan Education Association** has won funding to cover the cost for every teacher to attend up to four work days devoted to professional development designed at the local level.

That will mean an added 2.4 percent raise on top of normal bargained increases.

In other key states, like California and Ohio, NEA affiliates have tackled the teacher retention problem by winning dramatic pension formula improvements that make it attractive to stay put and teach for a long time.

But as long as other professions pay higher salaries—often for fewer responsibilities and less stress—more work needs to be done.

"Model schools should have strong, professional, and competitive salaries," stresses Bob Willoughby in New Jersey. "We want to see our profession grow by bringing in and keeping the best and brightest." ✔

For more on average teacher salaries, go to www.nea.org/publiced/edstats/salaries.html.

Heroes & Zeroes

The Salt Lake Tribune

▲ Frustrated by years of unkept promises for better school funding, thousands of Utah Education Association members walked off the job December 5 to protest a state education funding task force's failure to produce an acceptable long-term strategy. Utah has the nation's largest class sizes and critical shortages of textbooks and school supplies.

UEA members spread their message by waving "Utah Students Deserve More" signs at street corners and leafleting door to door. Those who stayed in the classroom wore red or black all day and showed solidarity by either working to the contract or distributing leaflets—on the need for long-term school funding—after school hours.

This one-day job action, called by the UEA Board of Directors, received full NEA support. "Your collective action," NEA President Bob Chase wrote UEA members, "sends a message to all public school employees and the public at large: As employees working with the community's children, you need the resources to do your job."

▼ Up in arctic Greenland, contract bargaining has collapsed between the government and IMAK, the teachers union. IMAK is attempting to improve educators' working conditions, which would enable this self-governed Danish territory to fill some 400 vacancies with overseas applicants.

Pending a settlement, members of IMAK and the Danish Union of Teachers are "boycotting" teacher positions in Greenlandic public schools and urging American colleagues to reject employment offers from the territory's government—which is *quite* interested in drawing applicants from Alaska.

Give Greenland the cold shoulder.

▲ The United Auto Workers union and the Ford and Visteon corporations will jointly run more than 30 "service and learning centers" for employee families. These 24-hour facilities will offer services like child and elder care, after-school programs, adult education classes, and even help arranging household repairs and personal travel.

This negotiated program "steps beyond traditional benefit and paycheck issues to provide cutting-edge opportunities for personal growth," says UAW President Stephen P. Yokich.

Your Work Shouldn't Hurt You

Many NEA members—from bus drivers to teachers—will be affected by new federal ergonomics standards. Take a long look at your own job.

John Farley was a model employee during his seven years as a bus driver in a Pennsylvania school district. This NEA member loved kids, enjoyed driving, and never, ever called in sick. Moreover, Farley was a state-certified driver trainer and highly active in a student bus safety program that was recognized across the Keystone State.

Photos by Rachelle Omenson

The old way of opening a school bus door, top photo, can cause a driver injury. An air-operated door opener, right, can prevent it. Ergonomic solutions are that simple.

But, over those seven years, this driver's unflagging devotion was matched by an unflagging workload, which tripled from 38 to 114 bus stops a day and tripled the repetitive stress on every part of his body.

"I added up a whole day of motions," he recalls, "and found that I made 700 motions per day with my right arm alone, manually opening and closing the bus door."

Bit by bit, Farley—whose name has been changed to protect his privacy—developed the signs and symptoms of musculoskeletal disorders. He was diagnosed with nerve damage in both of his wrists and elbows, and a bulging disk in his neck eventually herniated.

This damaged driver no longer belonged on the road. But he was forced to wage a demoralizing battle to convince his employer and its insurance carrier that his problems were directly related to his work.

After a long, bitter struggle, Farley failed to win either recognition or compensation, then left the district for good.

Today, three years after he quit in agony, Farley can't drive an automobile very far—"my nerves have a memory"—and his back problems are getting worse.

"I'll be haunted by these injuries for the rest of my life," he laments.

"Your body's safety mechanism is pain," Farley reminds the school employees he left behind. "If you're starting to hurt because of your job, stop what you're doing and go find an objective medical opinion. If you don't, you'll pay for it for the rest of your life."

"I knew something was wrong while I drove that bus," he continues, "but nobody gave me information on how to avoid these injuries. I should have been taken off that bus run and put on something less physical."

Farley comes close to describing part of the new ergonomic standards just released by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

These rules define musculoskeletal disorders—like carpal tunnel syndrome, tendinitis, and back injuries—as workplace hazards and require employers to take corrective measures when workers report "MSD" symptoms.

Barring a last-minute blocking action by the new President or Congress, the new OSHA standards were scheduled to go into effect January 16.

The new rules apply to all "general industry" employers, including public school employers in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and the 23 states that administer their own federally subsidized OSHA programs.

The 23 states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and Wyoming.

The product of a dogged, 10-year lobbying campaign by the AFL-CIO and its affiliated unions, the OSHA ergonomic standards reflect standards already in place in Japan, Britain, and Canada.

The rules require the covered employer to inform workers about common musculoskeletal disorders, MSD signs and symptoms, and the importance of early reporting. The employer must maintain a log of reports, signs, and symptoms of MSDs—and management responses—on an OSHA form that's available to workers and their unions.

The standards provide a basic MSD "screening tool," or checklist, that includes risk factors. Only when employees report an MSD sign or symptom and their job matches one or more of these risk factors is an employer required to take further action.

If the problem is an isolated incident, the employer can use a "quick fix" to manage the worker's exposure to the risk. But if a group of employees in the same job category meet a risk factor,

THE BOTTOM LINE

COMPUTERS: According to data supplied by one-third of the nation's 87,700 public schools, more than half the teachers in 63 percent of America's schools now use the Internet for instruction. For more: www.schooldata.com/pr22.html.

DROPOUTS: In 1999, 86 percent of young adults 24 and under had completed high school, a slight increase over the total from the early 1970s. For more: nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2001022.

KINDERGARTEN: First- and second-graders held out of kindergarten perform better in school than first- and second-graders who enter kindergarten at the standard age. For more: www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin045.shtml.

RURAL SCHOOLS: Over two-thirds of the parents of students in rural areas attended a school event in 1999, and 41 percent of rural parents volunteered for a school activity. For more: nces.ed.gov/surveys/ruraled.

the employer must set up a full ergonomic program, with elements like job hazard analysis and reduction, medical management and work restrictions, and ergonomic training.

These new standards could benefit *you,* whether you work in a boiler room, an office, or a classroom.

"Schools are a complex industry with all kinds of jobs, many of which have ergonomic hazards," points out Darryl Alexander, health and safety coordinator for the American Federation of Teachers. "I've heard from librarians with carpal tunnel syndrome, and even from teachers who sustained injuries while moving classrooms, including books and furniture."

During hearings last year on the standard, AFT members shocked OSHA staffers with graphic descriptions of the ergonomic hazards of school work.

Ursula Stafford, a 24-year-old paraeducator from New York City, spoke about how she ruptured three disks in her back after less than two weeks of hoisting and shifting a 250-pound paraplegic student in a wheelchair. The para had received just 15 minutes of informal training from the child's mother.

And New York school secretary Diane Moriarty described how an improperly designed computer work station had given her a frozen shoulder, crushed vertebrae, and repetitive stress injury of the hands.

School employees "have taken ergonomic hazards and risks as part of the job, and this should not be," says Alexander. "These new standards are incredible, with the potential to make schools safer for staff and students."

But the new rules will be useless unless they're enforced. Here's a checklist to follow:

1) Find out if the new OSHA standards apply to your state. Even if your state isn't in the initial list of 23, "many states automatically adopt OSHA standards for public employees," notes Alexander. "Check with your state Department of Labor to see what's being planned."

2) If you're covered by the standards, ensure compliance. "We have to hold administrators accountable," stresses Alexander. "Expect them to start giving information and education on ergonomic hazards, repetitive stress injuries, and the concept of these standards, and encourage your colleagues to report the signs and symptoms of RSIs."

"Listen to what co-workers are saying about those aches and pains," adds 16-year bus driver Denise Hacker, an ESP officer-at-large for the Pennsylvania State Education Association. "Take them seriously and don't pass judgment. Be supportive and steer them in the right direction to get the help they need."

3) Analyze jobs with the help of OSHA's "screening tool." "The labor movement got these 'caution standards' into the rules, and now they must be used," stresses Alexander. "Rely on them to evaluate your own job and others. And work with your district to come up with solutions that can save lots of money on absenteeism, health insurance costs, and the other hidden stuff connected to pain and injury."

"In New York City," Alexander notes, "we have started to train paraeducators to use this checklist to assess the hazardous activities they engage in all day. This could revolutionize how special education students are handled in the future."

4) Don't be swayed by poverty pleas. Sure, your district may have budget problems, but it need not spend big dollars to enforce the OSHA ergonomics standards.

Employees can often identify "simple changes" that would reduce risk, notes an OSHA factsheet. "Employers and employees working together can implement changes that reduce or eliminate risk factors without involving an expert."

5) Help keep these standards on the books. President George W. Bush and the new Congress will be under extreme pressure from business lobbyists to scrap these allegedly "costly" standards.

"Urge your members of Congress not to vote to stop implementation of these rules," says Alexander. "Tell them how these standards can protect you and members of your family." ✔

For more on the OSHA ergonomics standards, go to www.osha.gov. For an in-depth NEA study on bus drivers and repetitive stress, go to www.nea.org/esp/resource/repstres.htm.

"ergonomics *n pl*: an applied science concerned with designing or arranging things people use so that people and things interact most efficiently and safely."

—Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary

OSHA's 'Screening Tool' For Ergonomic Hazards

Risk Factor	Description
1) **Repetition**	Repeating the same motions every few seconds for two hours at a time, or using a keyboard, mouse, or other device steadily for more than four hours daily.
2) **Force**	Lifting more than 75 pounds at any one time, pushing/pulling with more than 20 pounds of initial force—such as pushing a 65-pound box across the floor—for more than two hours per day.
3) **Awkward Postures**	Working with the hands above the head for more than two hours per day, or working with the back, neck, or wrists bent for more than two hours a day.
4) **Contact Stress**	Using the hand as a hammer more than 10 times an hour for more than two hours total per day.
5) **Vibration**	Using tools or equipment with high vibration levels for more than 30 minutes per day or tools with moderate vibration for more than two hours per day.

TESTS: Only 41 percent of U.S. math teachers hold a math degree, according to the latest international study, compared to 71 percent of math teachers elsewhere. For more: ra.terc.edu/alliance/TEMPLATE/regional_networks/cia/assessment/timss.cfm.

MATH: The number of U.S. 17-year-olds who've taken calculus or precalculus doubled from 1978 to 1999, to 13 percent. Over half of 17-year-olds have now completed at least algebra II. For more: nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/site/home.asp.

WORK TIME: Married couples with children worked outside the home a combined total of 68 weeks a year back in 1968. In 1998, couples with children worked 83 total a year. For more: www.epinet.org/books/swa2000/surprising.

WEALTH: Nearly one in five households—18.6 percent—owe more in debt than they own in assets. In 1983, only 15.5 percent of households were in the red. For more: www.ufenet.org/research/Economic_Apartheid_Data.html#p53.

A Member Is a Member Is a Member

By working as one, teachers and support staff in South Dakota are earning respect at the bargaining table and in the community.

South Dakota, the state with the nation's lowest average teacher pay, is the kind of place where teachers need every last friend they can get. Small wonder that teachers and other certified staffers in the state's largest city, Sioux Falls, have turned to the folks who know them and the kids they teach the best: educational support personnel.

Certified members of the Sioux Falls Education Association have linked arms with paraeducators and office employees in two sister NEA local affiliates to build a ground-breaking partnership based on information sharing, mutual respect, and trust.

Photos by Dave Eggen

UniServ rep Diane Kummer, left, helps NEA local leaders Karen Fossum and Gail Swenson map out strategy.

It's an alliance that, when fully matured, will extend from mutual assistance in worksite organizing to joint lobbying in the state capital for increased education funding.

The seeds of this partnership were sown more than five years ago when NEA helped form the KEY—Kids, Education, and You—Network, a coalition of eight school district employee organizations affiliated to either NEA or unions that belong to the AFL-CIO.

In its short life, the KEY Network has successfully elected a pro-public education school board.

But the district's teacher-ESP partnership really got a jump start in 1999, when the NEA locals started meeting monthly. Local presidents Gail Swenson, Karen Fossum, and Helen Schlueter would swap information, devise common strategies for challenges like member recruitment, and plan projects to help involve every member.

"It takes a lot of time and effort to get through problems," says Schlueter, an accounts payable clerk who heads the Sioux Falls Association of Educational Secretaries. "But I see a change in attitudes between teachers and support staff because of this process."

By talking and collaborating, she adds, teachers come "to understand ESP problems as much as we understand theirs, and it's easier to get closer to what we all want."

Among the collaboration payoffs:

■ **Membership growth.** Organized cadres from the three locals train and work together to implement an effective recruitment strategy based on repeated personal contacts with the nonmember—even from NEA members outside that person's bargaining unit.

"A member is a member is a member," stresses Sioux Falls Education Association President Gail Swenson.

"We don't try to 'guilt' the nonmember into joining," she notes. "When we approach new teachers, for example, we talk about things like liability coverage, having someone to turn to for help, and the networking advantages of Association membership."

■ **Added respect from the superintendent and school board.** It's often tempting for managers to pit one group against another, but Sioux Falls certified staffers and ESP don't make it easy. The three local presidents share grievance updates and bargaining information and debunk misinformation that could divide employees and undermine unity.

Management is "aware that we are working together, and that makes them think," observes Swenson. "They see us sitting together and commenting to one another at school board meetings."

■ **Greater strength in bargaining.** As a consequence of unity, ESP have closed the rights and benefits gap with teachers—and are on the way to closing another gap.

"In our last negotiations, we finally got the same percentage offer as teachers," says Karen Fossum, president of the Sioux Falls Educational Assistants Association. "That made us feel better—it was a respect issue."

Closing gaps creates new openings at the bargaining table. Helen Schlueter would like to see all three contracts expire on a common date, and she also predicts that her clerical members will next push for "more money and language changes" that reflect the value of their work.

■ **Higher visibility in the community.** Sioux Falls teachers and ESP are also collaborating on American Education Week activities and the Children First campaign, an effort sponsored jointly by the South Dakota Education Association, the Sioux Falls ABC-TV affiliate, and the Dacotah Bank.

The three Sioux Falls NEA locals

THE BOTTOM LINE

HEALTH: The 11th annual ranking of the healthiest states in the nation ranks New Hampshire, Minnesota, and Utah at the top—and South Carolina, Louisiana, and Mississippi at the bottom. For more: www.unitedhealthgroup.com.

CHILDREN: Just under 130 million kids were born across the world in 1999, the last year with complete statistics available. That same year, 11 million kids under five died, most from entirely preventable causes. For more: www.unicef.org/sowc01/.

INFANTS: In 1915, 100 of every 1,000 white babies—and nearly 200 Black infants per 1,000—died within a year. In 1998, only 6 white and 14 Black infants per 1,000 died before age one. For more: www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/abstract/106/6/1307.

HAZARDS: Over 80 percent of young children enrolled in Medicaid have not been screened with a blood lead test. About 5 percent of all U.S. children have elevated lead blood levels. For more: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr4914a1.htm.

work together on both statewide and local Children First projects. Locally, they plan everything from the distribution of parent and teen education materials to serving dinners to the homeless.

"One of our past activities," reports Fossum, "was distributing books to needy kids at 'The Banquet,' a soup kitchen. Some of these kids had never had their own books. We—ESP and teachers—all worked on this together!"

■ **A louder voice in the state capital.** Gail Swenson regularly reports back to the monthly local presidents' meeting on her involvement with the statewide Invest in Education coalition. Last year, the coalition tried and failed to get state lawmakers to maintain state school aid in the face of declining student enrollment.

"Teachers and support staff need to think how they could get along without each other!"

—Teacher assistant Karen Fossum

This year, the coalition will be back *in force* to push for an annual improvement factor in the state aid formula, set at the rate of inflation plus 2 percent.

For South Dakota schools, the stakes have never been higher. A recent poll indicates that a certified teacher shortage—fed by retirements and resignations to work out of state—is severe, and that "money or lack of respect" are teachers' major reasons for leaving.

"Last year, Invest in Education brought people to lobby on 'Education Tuesdays,'" reports Swenson. "We started bringing in ESP, and we want to expand their involvement this year. We need all the help we can get in the campaign for more school funding and respect for school employees."

■ **Mutual respect.** By collaborating, Sioux Falls teachers and ESP are learning that respect begins at home.

"We as support staff need to respect teachers," says ed assistant Fossum. "We can't do their job because we don't have their academic background and training."

Teachers, for their part, are realizing that not everyone can do ESP work.

"Teachers need to value ESP work," notes Fossum. "It takes a certain type of person to work with children."

On the playground, in the lunchroom, or outside of the structured environment of the classroom, Fossum adds, support staff see children in a different light than teachers.

"We can see who bullies whom and who needs emotional support," she points out, "and we can pass that information along to teachers."

Sums up Fossum: "Teachers and suppport staff need to sit down and think how they would get along without each other!" ✔

For more information, contact Gail Swenson at sfea@sdea.org, Karen Fossum at lfossum@dtgnet.com, or Helen Schlueter at shschlueter@ll.net.

Do'ers Profile

HELEN SCHLUETER

■ ***Name and profession:*** Helen Schlueter, accounts payable clerk

■ ***NEA local affiliate:*** Sioux Falls (South Dakota) Association of Educational Sectetaries

■ ***Position:*** Local president

■ ***Ongoing project:*** "Each fall, we have a general meeting for Association recruitment for all secretaries in our district. Our membership had been down in the last two years, but this year we have increased our numbers by 40 percent—by keeping our members and all new clericals more informed than ever. We have also had an open house gathering in one of our homes, away from everyone's building.

"This year we have also instituted 'secret pals' to keep as many people in touch with each other as much as we can—we have 34 work locations—and everyone involved is having a great time with this.

"All these things, along with informational newsletters from our NEA state affiliate and from our own local board, have kept all of us involved. Our membership is stronger for it."

■ ***Words of wisdom:*** "I believe that a higher percentage of Association membership gives you more clout when it comes to negotiations and dealing with the school board and superintendent of your district. Administrators count your members, so make your membership count!"

KUDOS TO...

Minnesotans Save College

. . . **In Minnesota, members of the United Technical College Educators** have successfully worked with the community, legislators, students, alumni, and other staff to prevent the closing of Anoka-Hennepin Technical College (AHTC). The college, targeted for extinction last winter because of much-needed repairs, will now get $12.5 million for renovations.

AHTC will also get a new "middle college" that offers seamless transition from the 11th and 12th grades to the first two years of postsecondary education.

. . . **Members of the Plaquemines (Louisiana) Association of Educators (PAE)** and community allies convinced voters last fall to pass three school millage proposals by whopping three to one margins. That means raises this school year of $4,000 for teachers and $3,000 for ESP.

"This raise will help cover our insurance premium increases," says PAE President Jean Kelly, "and also make a difference in our retirement checks when that time rolls around."

. . . **ESP in Gorham, Maine,** have a new contract that gives drivers and maintenance personnel raises of 10 to 30 percent over three years—and health insurance that remains at 100 percent of the previous year's rate. A revamped ESP salary scale has 15 two-percent steps, with a process for new and existing employees to obtain credit for up to five years' prior experience.

. . . **In Washington State, the United Faculty of Central** has won $6,000 in back pay for a tenured Central Washington University English professor—and published poet—who was overlooked while the school hired new assistant professors in his department at salaries far above his. The settlement amount will be added to the professor's salary base, and he will continue to receive the additional $6,000 annually until he retires.

. . . In bargaining, **the Mercer County (New Jersey) Community College Faculty Association (MCCFA)** has defeated a Board of Trustees attempt to force staff to pay part of their prescription drug benefits—payments that would have escalated dramatically over the term of the contract—and to give college deans unilateral authority over course scheduling. MCCEA's new three-year contract gives faculty raises of 3.6 percent, 4 percent, and 3.8 percent.

SPECIAL ED: **Three-quarters of the more than 5.5 million kids with disabilities served under IDEA, the federal special ed legislation, are now educated in regular classrooms. For more: www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/OSEP2000AnlRpt/.**

FITNESS: **Nearly 75 percent of students starting high school participate regularly in vigorous physical activity. But, by graduation day, only 60 percent of high school seniors are exercising. For more: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/presphysactrpt.**

HIV: **Young people in the United States are now contracting the HIV virus at the rate of 20,000 new cases a year. Worldwide, 1999 saw six million new AIDS cases. For more: www.whitehouse.gov/ONAP/hot.html.**

NUTRITION: **Over 40 percent of students who get free or reduced-price school lunches now also receive school breakfasts, the highest percentage ever. For more: www.frac.org/html/news/breakfastscorecard00.html.**

Vouchers on Trial

One court rules they're unconstitutional in Cleveland, while a Florida court gives the OK for now.

In one of the most important voucher rulings to date, a federal appeals court has declared that the Cleveland voucher program violates the U.S. Constitution.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit ruled on December 11 that the use of taxpayer money to fund religious education breaches the wall of separation between church and state.

"This scheme," the court said, "involves the grant of state aid directly and predominantly to the coffers of private religious schools."

"We certainly hope everyone will get the message," says Robert Chanin, NEA general counsel and the attorney who argued the case in court. "And the message is 'Let's focus on improving the public schools and stop playing around with vouchers as a panacea.'"

Cleveland-area vouchers are worth up to $2,250, depending on family income. For the 1999-2000 school year, 3,761 students received vouchers. Those students have been allowed to continue in the program during the appeal.

On paper, the voucher students were free to attend either public or private schools. But in fact, fully 96 percent of the students used the vouchers to attend pervasively sectarian schools.

And the court was deeply concerned that public money was being spent to subsidize religious indoctrination.

As an example, the court cited one voucher school that requires its students to "pledge allegiance to the Christian flag and to the Savior for whose Kingdom it stands...."

In declaring the program unconstitutional, the Sixth Circuit relied on a 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision known as *Nyquist* that struck down a similar voucher plan from New York.

The court's 2-1 decision provoked a particularly vociferous dissent from Judge James Ryan. The Reagan appointee accused the two judges in the majority of "nativist bigotry" and claimed that their "antireligious" ruling will result in "sentencing nearly 4,000 poverty-level, mostly minority, children to return to the indisputably failed Cleveland public schools."

The two judges in the majority dismissed the dissent's allegations as nothing more than "gratuitous insults" that "should not be taken seriously."

Ohio state officials recently asked the entire appeals court to rehear the case, but a decision is not expected for several months. Lawyers on both sides agree that the case likely will wind up before the U.S. Supreme Court, where the outcome is anyone's guess.

Meanwhile, a Florida appeals court last October upheld that state's voucher program, although the court sidestepped the question whether the program violates the federal Constitution's prohibition of public funding for religious education.

The lower court had ruled that the state can't "pay for private education" because the state constitution requires the state to maintain a "high quality system of free public schools." The appeals court reversed the decision.

Under the Florida plan, students who attend public schools designated by the state as "failing schools" twice in a four-year period are eligible for vouchers.

But only 52 students are currently participating in the program. No new students were added this year because none of the public schools that previously received failing grades got an "F" again this year.

An appeal in the case is now pending before the Florida Supreme Court.

Between the defeat of voucher ballot initiatives in California and Michigan last November and the Sixth Circuit's important ruling, voucher proponents have taken it on the chin of late.

Undaunted, they apparently have now taken aim at the federal treasury.

President George W. Bush has already vowed to push for legislation that lets parents use "their share of federal funding" to pay for private schooling.

Watch this space for an update. ✔

—Michael D. Simpson
NEA Office of General Counsel

The Ohio decision is posted at http://pacer.ca6.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/getopn.pl?OPINION=00a0411p.06. The Florida decision is posted at http://www.1dca.org/opinion/10-03-2000/00-1121.htm.

Courts uphold affirmative action in student admissions

Efforts to promote student diversity through affirmative action got a big boost last December when two federal courts ruled that the practice is lawful.

Significantly, both decisions relied on the U.S. Supreme Court's 1978 ruling *Regents of the Univ. of California v. Bakke* in holding that an applicant's race can be one factor—among others—considered by institutions of higher education in making admissions decisions.

Affirmative action opponents had argued that *Bakke* has been overturned, but these courts disagreed.

- In Washington, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit upheld the University of Washington Law School's affirmative action program, declaring that "the attainment of a diverse student body is a constitutionally permissible goal for an institution of higher education." (The university abandoned the challenged policy, however, after Washington voters passed a ballot initiative banning racial preferences in public education.)
- In Michigan, federal judge Patrick Duggan declared that the University of Michigan's affirmative action admissions policy is legal under *Bakke*, citing "solid evidence regarding the educational benefits that flow from a racially and ethnically diverse student body." Lawyers for the plaintiffs have already announced that they will appeal.
- But in Georgia, a federal district court last year struck down the University of Georgia's affirmative action program. That decision has been appealed to a federal appeals court, setting up a possible showdown before the U.S. Supreme Court over whether *Bakke* is still the law of the land.

THE BOTTOM LINE

STUDENTS: Elementary and secondary enrollment in 2010 will be up less than 2 percent over the 1998 total, researchers now predict. Higher ed enrollments are expected to rise by 20 percent. For more: nces.ed.gov/pubs2000/projections/.

COLLEGES: The number of 18- to 24-year-olds in postsecondary classes varies widely by state. California's 38 percent enrollment rate nearly doubles Nevada's 20 percent. For more: measuringup2000.highereducation.org/getpress.cfm.

COURTS: Nearly two-thirds of the youth detained before trial are now held in adult jails. About 40 percent of convicted minority youth are sentenced to incarceration. The white youth rate: 26 percent. For more: www.buildingblocksforyouth.org/ycat/.

JUVENILE JUSTICE: Of the 38 states that now authorize the death penalty, 23 allow the execution of individuals who have committed a capital offense before they turned 18. For more: ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/court.html#184748.

INTERVIEW

Morgan Freeman On Reading

Movie superstar Morgan Freeman, chair of NEA's Read Across America campaign for 2001, urges kids to read for understanding.

Morgan Freeman's eclectic body of work ranges from *Amistad* to the recently released *Nurse Betty*. One of the most highly regarded talents in the film industry, Freeman has received Academy Award nominations for his work in *Street Smart* (Best Supporting Actor), *Driving Miss Daisy* (Best Actor), and *The Shawshank Redemption* (Best Actor). So perhaps it's ironic that someone who makes his living on the screen is now telling kids to turn off the TV.

Freeman (pictured right) was in Philadelphia recently, taping a public service announcement for NEA's Read Across America for 2001 campaign, when *NEA Today*'s Michelle Y. Green caught up with him.

When you were a child, did you like to read?
When I was a kid—I was so excited about it—I had a library card at eight, and my whole world opened up. It got so broad and filled with adventure and the knowledge of things. I learned that the sun was 96 million miles away from the earth because Superman told me that. I read it in a comic book. I grew up in the days of radio.

This kind of minimalist entertainment, where the mind has to do the bulk of the work, is way far and ahead of what we have now in terms of just turning on the TV.

What needs to be done to develop that same love of reading in kids today?
As educators, parents, anyone who's concerned with getting our kids to read, we have our work cut out for us. So much in the way of technology today competes for kids' interest. And the Internet and television are icon-driven—which means you don't have to read anything.

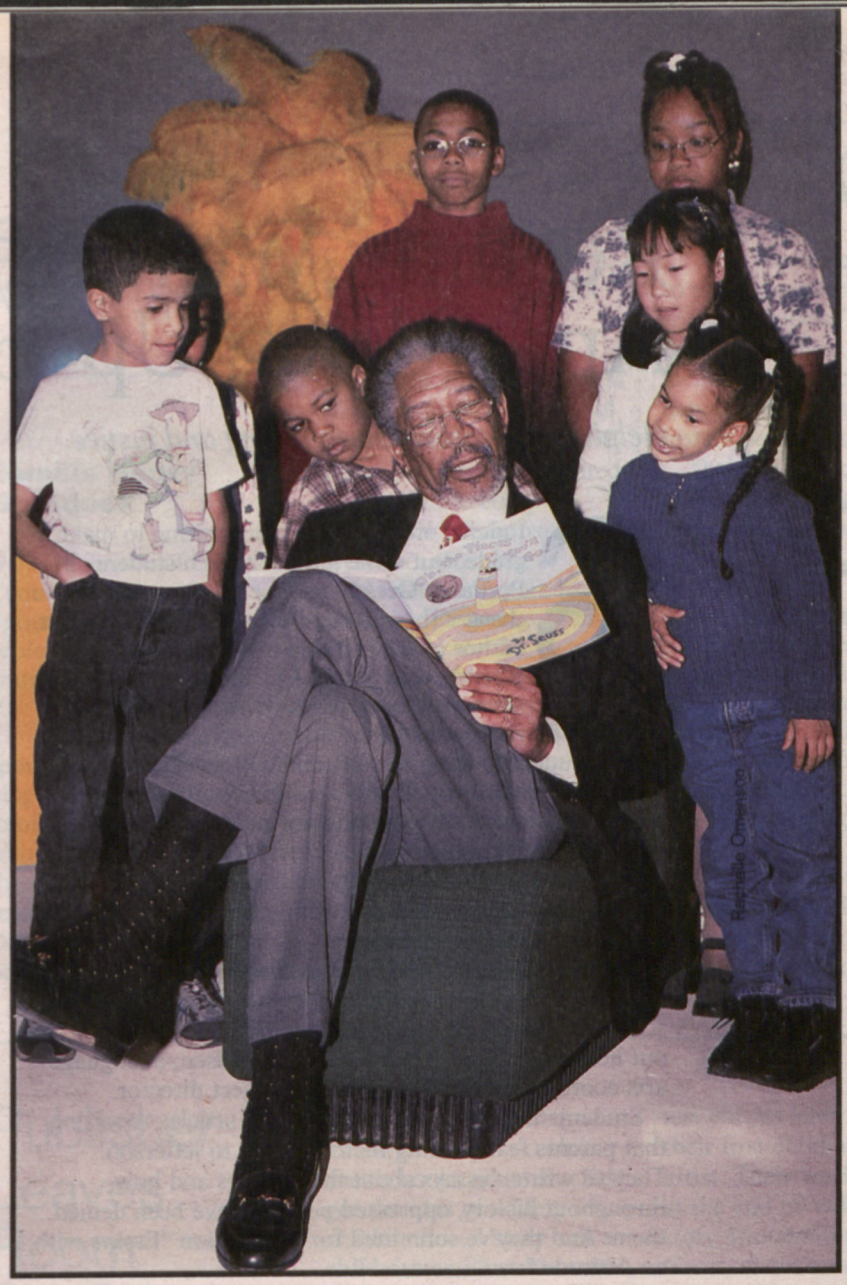
We're not going to turn back the march of technology, especially since television is leading that march.

I understand that core research from programs such as *Sesame Street* has found that while television has taught kids to recognize words, it hasn't taught them how to read. Reading is not just bringing the words together. Reading is understanding.

That's why I would recommend that you drastically shorten the amount of time that you allow children to watch television. Much of it is just mind-numbing. A better thing to do is to give them a good book—or any book. Even a bad book is better than a marginal TV show.

Yet you've created your own production company, Revelations Entertainment. Is there a role for film and TV in educating kids?
Television and film can be the two most powerful teaching tools known to man, as far as I'm concerned. Visual stimulation of young minds is very important. But what are you stimulating them with? *That's* the crux of the matter.

The name of the production company I cofounded with Lori McCreary is Revelations Entertainment. Just consider the name itself: "Revelations". The films, the stories we want to tell, are revealing. They tell us something about ourselves. They tell us something about our history. Because of the proliferation of venues for storytelling, there is a great need now for product and we are mining every resource.



Rachelle Omenson

RESOURCES

- *The Press Central page of NEA's Read Across America Web site has press releases, celebrity promos, and more to read, listen to, and download. www.nea.org/readacross/press/html*
- *Visit NEA's Reading Matters Web site for year-round news, expert advice, classroom and home activities, and resources for adults to help children improve their reading skills and develop a love for literacy. www.nea.org/readingmatters/*
- Reading for Meaning: Fostering Comprehension in the Middle Grades *offers an overview of current research on teaching reading to middle grade students. 216 pp. $19.95, Teachers College Press, 800/575-6566*
- *Visit Revelations Entertainment, http://revelationsent.com*

There's all this talk about violence on TV, but that has nothing to do with the industry. All televisions have an on/off switch and a channel selection button, and the Internet has filters. The best thing is limited viewing.

How has reading enriched your career?
People say that I'm very good at choosing good projects to do. Well if I am, I chalk that up to my ability to know a good story.

If you read, you learn the ingredients of a good story. If you can remember any of the great books you read, the ones that really grabbed you on page one, you can just about quote the first line: "Call me Ishmael" or "Mother died today, or maybe yesterday"—what an opening!

Isn't another favorite role of yours reading to a particular grandchild?
I used to read to one granddaughter a lot because we were on the road together when she was little. She had a library that was amazing. One of my favorite stories was *Liza Lou and the Yeller Belly Swamp* by Mercer Mayer (Aladdin Picture Books), a wonderfully illustrated book about a child who lived in the Louisiana swamp and how she and her pet opossum outwit everyone.

In addition to your film roles, many people remember you as Easy Reader on the PBS television series "The Electric Company."
Yes, that was my first role as a character actor. And Easy Reader holds a special place in my heart not only because of the creative opportunity it offered, but because of the chance the role gave me to promote the joy of reading and the importance of literacy. I'm happy to have that chance again with my role in NEA's Read Across America. ✔

The theme for NEA's fourth annual Read Across America celebration is "Oh, The Places You Can Go!" For more information, visit the Web at www.nea.org/readacross.

Reading, Writing, And Rising Up

Helping students connect writing and justice.

Students often change their writing to make a grade. But some Jefferson High students in Portland, Oregon use their writing to make a change. That's because **Linda Christensen**, author of the recently released *Reading, Writing, and Rising Up: Teaching About Social Justice and the Power of the Written Word*, has created a literacy-based social justice curriculum that moves student writing into the realm of social action.

Jefferson High School is located in a working-class community where students of color make up 85 percent of the school's population. For years, Christensen has worked to reach students by helping them reflect on their personal experiences and connecting them to the world of language, literature, and society.

"Students who see what's happening in their neighborhoods, who feel life is pretty unfair, are more interested in school when you can begin naming problems and figuring out how to change them," notes Christensen, a language arts coordinator and K-12 writing project director.

Students now respond to newspaper articles reporting that parents fear sending their children to Jefferson. They've written essays about their names and how, throughout history, oppressed peoples have been denied them. And they've submitted for publication "Essays with an Attitude."

Even correcting assignments becomes an object lesson. "Instead of just marking errors, we talk about the politics of language," says Christensen. "Standard language is about power—who has it and who doesn't."

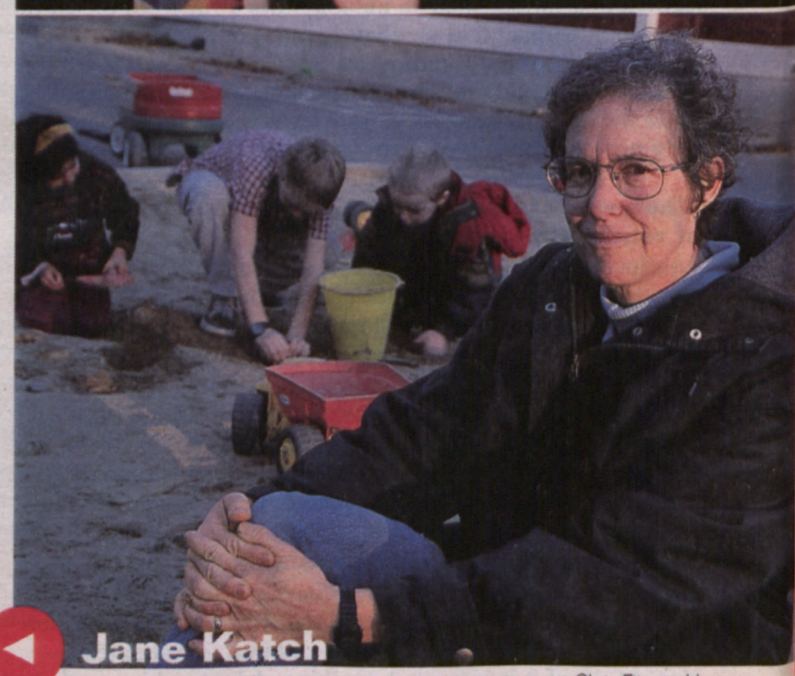
Reading, Writing, and Rising Up contains these exercises, along with Christensen's essays and student writing.

Impact: Students who previously shunned school have been published in national magazines. Some have pursued journalism and film careers. Says Christensen: "The students I was most successful with didn't feel they had a sense of privilege—but felt that, through writing, they'd become empowered to change that."

For More: Contact Christensen at Lchrist@aol.com. To order *Reading, Writing, and Rising Up* ($12.95), call 800/669-4192 or visit www.rethinkingschools.org.

Michael Halle

Linda Christensen



Jane Katch

Chris Fitzgerald

Dealing with 'Bang, Bang, You're Dead'

Jane Katch *has taught five- and six-year-olds in central Massachusetts—and audiotaped the violent fantasy games that some boys seem to love to play. Katch, who has worked with Bruno Bettelheim and Vivian Paley, has now written* Under Dead Man's Skin: Discovering the Meaning of Children's Violent Play *(Beacon) about what she has learned.*

How did you handle violent fantasy play?

There are two issues here: what the fantasies are about and how the boys treat each other. Boys can have violent fantasies and still play them cooperatively.

But there also were rules about the fantasies. They couldn't be too explicitly gory, for example, because some people didn't like it—not because I as the authority figure decided for them.

How did they arrive at these rules?

I insisted that they talk until they came to a compromise. Most of the time, we used a consensus model rather than voting. I prefer this method because then they have to listen to everyone.

Any surprises in your study?

I didn't expect the connection between violence and exclusion. At first, I was cutting out everything that had to do with exclusion because I thought it was off the subject, but it kept coming in.

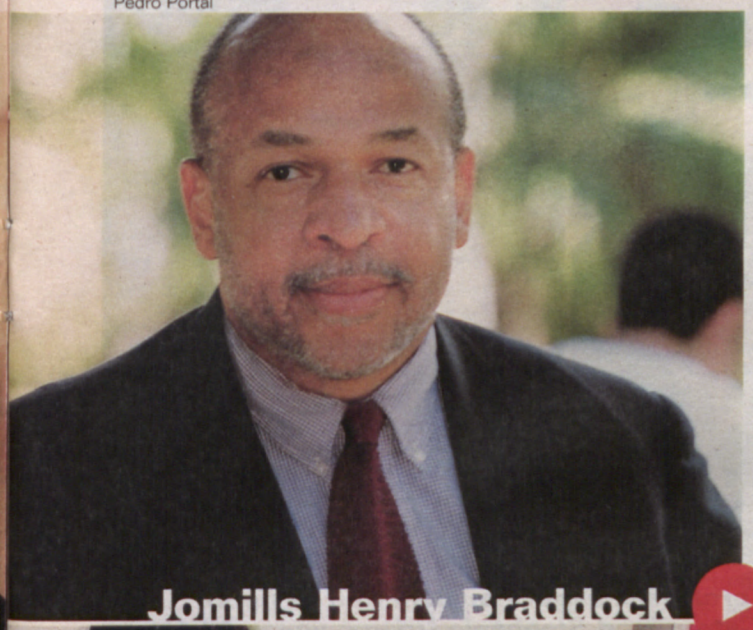
A child who is excluded sometimes feels justified in feeling violent. And the children who do the excluding seem to feel justified in violence toward the excluded child—it's okay to hurt him because he's not one of us.

The only incidents in the book that involved real violence, rather than fantasy play, had to do with exclusion. That's what really made the kids angry.

For more:

Order *Under Dead Man's Skin* at www.nea.org/neatoday/0102/innov.html, $17.60 plus s&h.

Pedro Portal



Jomills Henry Braddock

Sports Make the Grade

Innovator:
Jomills Henry Braddock

Job: Director of the Center for Research on Sports in Society and professor of sociology, University of Miami

Bright Idea: For kids, sports and school are a winning combination. So finds Jomills Henry Braddock, who's just completed a three-year, $350,000 research project for the Department of Education. Some 14,000 eighth graders were surveyed on their involvement in school sports, and they were tracked for six years.

The results?

Student athletes were less likely to drop out of school and, in class, showed more effort, were better prepared, and tended to complete homework. Their parents were more involved.

"Athletes are more likely to develop a stronger sense of personal worth," Braddock adds, "and feel they have more control over their fate than those not involved in sports."

Sports, the Center research shows, produce other benefits as well.

One example: Sports offer youth the opportunity to travel, and this travel helps build youngsters' "cultural capital."

"And because adults tend to pay more attention to student athletes," notes Braddock, "these students form a social circle of adult networks and mentors that fosters personal success."

The data are consistent among major ethnic groups and across gender.

Next Steps: The Center has created an elementary school curriculum, using sports as the context for instruction in reading, writing, and math. The curriculum will be piloted in four Florida school-based, after-school programs.

For More: E-mail Braddock at braddock@miami.edu and visit the Web at www.as.miami.edu/crss/.

Lisa Funari Willever

Lisa Rudy Hoke

Publisher Leaves Room for Kids

Innovator:
Lisa Funari Willever

Job: Publisher, Franklin Mason Press

Bright Idea: Willever created a publishing company for children's books that includes a story and artwork created by children in every volume published. Her purpose is to nurture kids' natural enthusiasm for the arts.

Willever is an elementary school teacher at Joyce Kilmer School in Trenton, New Jersey. She had already written two children's books when she first got the idea of adding a child-authored story and a child-drawn illustration at the end of her books.

"My students were always writing stories and asking me, 'Can you help me make this a book?'" explains Willever.

But when she brought her idea to publishers, they turned her down.

"The small publishers felt they couldn't do it, and the big ones didn't need to," she says.

So Willever and her firefighter husband, Todd, started Franklin Mason Press.

The couple organized a contest to get contributions from children aged six to nine. Several hundred contest entries later, they chose their first child author and artist. Their work appeared at the end of Willever's story *Maximilian the Great*, about a magician who couldn't quite get his spells right.

Impact: Franklin Mason Press's second contest drew more than 500 entries from as far away as Louisiana. The winners are being published in *The Easter Chicken*, due out this month. In schools where children have taken part in the contest, more children are now writing without being "told to."

For More: Visit www.franklinmason.com for information on future publishing opportunities for young artists.

Teacher Training, Hands-On Learning

Innovator: Sylvia Seidel

Job: NEA staffer in Washington, D.C., working on teacher preparation issues

Bright Idea: What's NEA doing to support innovation in teacher preparation? Just look at the work of Sylvia Seidel and the fall 2000 issue of *Teaching and Change*, the NEA journal that's a forum for teachers, at all levels, to explore change and innovation.

The fall issue is devoted to NEA's Teacher Education Initiative and its five-year, research-based study of professional development schools.

These schools, modeled after the medical profession's teaching hospitals, bring the university into the classroom, allowing the wisdom of actual practitioners to improve the university program.

The Teacher Education Initiative sites also bring a unique element to the school-university partnership concept.

"Our requirement that the NEA local affiliate be one of the institutional partners in the professional development school sets these sites apart from other collaboratives," says Seidel, who coordinates the project for NEA's Teaching and Learning unit. "It's key to surmounting boundaries and creating learning opportunities for all professionals."

The Teacher Education Initiative experience has also provided insights into:

- what makes an effective clinical/field experience for preprofessionals
- why effective teacher training needs to focus on student learning
- how professional development schools enhance leadership skills.

For More: For a free excerpt from this issue of *Teaching and Change* (vol. 8, issue 1), go to www.nea.org/technology/thompson.pdf. To subscribe to *Teaching and Change*, contact Corwin Press, 805/375-1700, E-mail info@corwin.sagepub.com.

Been There, Recently

Young Kentucky teachers train their first-year colleagues.

Photos by Rob Carr

The new faces of professional development (left to right): Gigi Miller, Gala Catron, and Stephanie Urlage, young NEA members who know what it's like to be a first-year teacher.

The beginning of the first year of teaching is rough for almost everybody. But few new teachers have ever started out as roughly as Stephanie Urlage.

At the start of her teaching career, Urlage couldn't even stand up in front of her Richmond, Kentucky classroom. Urlage had been in a construction accident and couldn't walk. To get around White Hall Elementary, she had to use a wheelchair. She also had to miss a lot of her first school days, to see doctors about blood clots in her leg.

But things weren't totally bleak. The school's principal got a special chair to help Urlage maneuver between student desks, and the children vied for the honor of wheeling "Ms. Urlage" around.

"I had days when I thought I'd never dig myself out of my hole," recalls Urlage, the former president of the Kentucky Education Association Student Program. "But I had the greatest kids. They were part of my recovery."

It wasn't until March of her first year that Urlage realized that, despite her recovery, she could have failed to get her teaching certificate.

Under Kentucky law, a teacher's first year is an internship, and first-year teachers must meet a long list of requirements. Urlage was at risk for failing to teach a minimum number of days. She met the requirement, but she realized, then and there, just how easy it is for new teachers to lose track of all the rules.

Now in her third year, Urlage has joined forces with two other young teachers, Gigi Miller of Lexington and Gala Catron of Frankfort, to help today's first-year teachers avoid the same problems she faced.

Urlage and her colleagues have designed a three-hour Kentucky Education Association workshop that aims to help interns master the tricks of the trade that so many teacher education programs leave out.

The program's title: "So you want to be a teacher. Is that your final answer?"

Almost all the trainers in the program are young, notes Urlage.

"They can say, 'This is a headache I had. I don't want you to have it,'" she points out.

Last fall, more than 700 interns and their resource teachers took the training. The first hour covers both the detailed requirements of the internship regulations and the intricacies of special education law.

Trainers also offer neophytes an array of useful tips covering everything from grant writing to relating to parents at conferences.

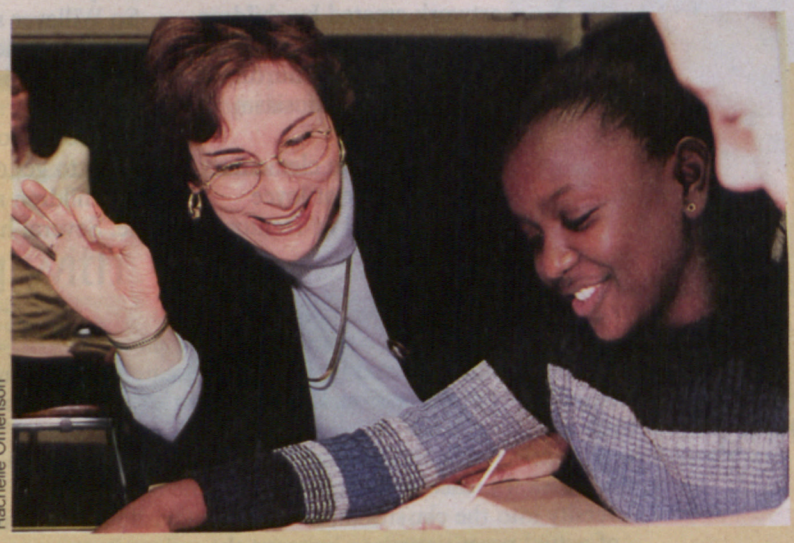
For example, Urlage tells new teachers that at conferences, they should sit with the parents and not have a table in between. She suggests that they keep a box of tissues handy because at least one parent is likely to cry.

Urlage also likes to tell new teachers that "you must have a life outside of school or you'll go nuts."

How I Did It

Beth Broder Epstein
Lawrence Middle School language arts/reading specialist
Lawrenceville, New Jersey

A new twist on multiple choice answer sheets teaches while testing, giving students immediate feedback on whether they've gotten the answer right.



Rachelle Omenson

Students who use traditional multiple-choice test forms, Scantrons especially, leave the test without knowing the correct answers. What's more, psychologists know that the last answer a test-taker gives is most likely to be repeated—even if it's wrong. That means students exit tests remembering incorrect information, answers they gave without corrective feedback.

With my husband, a psychology professor at Rider University, I've developed a new multiple-choice testing technique that teaches students even as they're taking their exam. It's called "Immediate Feedback Assessment Technique," or IF AT—a reminder of "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

This method uses a form in which the four multiple-choice options are covered, much as a lottery ticket is. If the right answer has been selected, the student will uncover a star beneath the opaque covering.

The student who uncovers the star knows that he's correct and earns full credit. The student who uncovers a blank is instructed to try again by rereading the question and the remaining options. If he is correct on his second try, he earns partial credit for his "proximate knowledge."

Workshop leaders distribute a host of materials to help interns cope. Among the most useful, says Urlage, are three books from the NEA Professional Library: *The Best of Works4Me*, *Pitfalls and Potholes*, and *The Best of Teacher-to-Teacher*. ✔

"This is a headache I had. I don't want you to have it."

—Stephanie Urlage, relating the message that young workshop leaders send to first-year teachers

—*Alain Jehlen*

For more: E-mail Urlage at Surlage@madison.k12.ky.us, or call Judith Gambill, president of the Kentucky Education Association, at 800/231-4532. For info on the NEA Professional Library, check www.nea.org/books.

So often, a test taker eliminates all but two options and guesses at the correct response. With traditional multiple-choice forms, that student would guess randomly—and sometimes correctly, though he wouldn't really know.

With the immediate feedback forms, students can work through their top two choices—they learn while taking the test.

Students like the game quality of these test forms, and they like leaving the test with correct information and their scores. They also tend to read the question and options more carefully than when using traditional forms.

For more information on the Immediate Feedback Assessment Technique form, contact Beth Broder Epstein at 609/895-5424 or E-mail epstein@rider.edu.

[DILEMMA]

What do you do when parents show no interest in things like IEP meetings?

I live in a rural town where the majority of parents work in agriculture and are monolingual Spanish speakers. Yet, last year, I had all but two parents attend their child's IEP meetings. I accomplished this in several ways.

First, I had the parents set the meeting times. This meant I had meetings from 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Parents want to be involved in their child's education, but sometimes they risk losing their job if they miss work.

Second, I worked on learning some Spanish. Each meeting has a translator who speaks much better than I do. But I always add something in Spanish on my own, because I want to show the parents that I value their culture and language.

Third, I get to know the parents outside of school. This is a small town, and I often run into my students and their parents. I stop and at least say hi, and I relate how their child is doing, in my limited Spanish.

I don't do this all on my own. I work in an exceptional elementary school where everyone works to help the students achieve.

Brian Berghout
K-2 special education teacher
Mattawa, Washington

■ After 14 years as a special education teacher, I've heard almost every excuse for why a parent can't attend a meeting. I'm prepared for most of them.

If the parents say they have no babysitter, I tell them to bring the children along, and I make sure there are games and a snack. If transportation is an issue, the school social worker is sometimes able to provide that. I may schedule an IEP meeting the hour before back-to-school night or the winter concert, so that only one trip needs to be made to school.

If a new baby is the excuse, a conference call can be set up in the principal's office. I've even been known to meet parents in the school parking lot as they pick up their children.

Susan Kreiner
K-5 special education teacher
Perkasie, Pennsylvania

■ Coming to school to talk about a child's disability is an emotional issue for parents. IEP teams are often large, and parents feel outnumbered and overwhelmed. Or parents may appear disinterested if not asked to actively participate in the meeting.

To make this experience more parent-friendly, I've developed a method for conducting IEP meetings.

I print an agenda. The first item, after introductions, is "Questions/comments from [parent's name]." Next, we highlight the child's strengths, with the parents first noting progress they've seen. Then we provide samples of student work. Finally, we list the child's progress since the last IEP.

Parents leave the meeting with a folder of student work, a list of "positives," and, most importantly, a feeling that they have been an integral part of the IEP process.

Mary Michaels
Special education teacher
Woodbury, Minnesota

■ Be sure to offer meeting times that are convenient to you and the parent. Stay open to any form of communication the parent is comfortable with—phone, face-to-face, E-mail.

IEPs and the like can be a very intimidating process for parents. They're hearing lots of terms for the first time—things that we deal with every day. I talk with the parent ahead of time and explain what an "IEP" is and why we are meeting. I walk them through the process.

On the day of the meeting, I have the parent come to my room first, and we go to the meeting together, if possible. I sit next to the parent, to be sure they understand and are comfortable with the process.

Barbara O'Brien
Fourth grade teacher
Wood River, Illinois

Got an Answer?

How do you raise morale at work?
E-mail your answer to dilemma2@neatoday.nea.org. Or send by regular mail, or Fax to 202/822-7206. Please include your name, city, state, job title, and grade level, if applicable.

NEA members published in this column will receive a bright *NEA Today* mug.

Longer Days, More Learning

Teachers make an extended-day school a success—and are compensated for it.

Bob Riha, Jr.

"What keeps us going," says kindergarten teacher DeLois Hoover, "is the excitement of how far students are going and how much we can do."

What will the school of the future be like? The Intensive Learning Center in Lakewood, California, just south of Los Angeles, offers an enticing possibility.

In this K-6 public school, the district agreed to pay teachers so that the 850 students can attend classes from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. for 200 days a year.

What good is all that extra time?

In December, kindergarten teacher Linda Little asked her students to write letters to Santa.

"I taught first grade for 18 years," she says, "and I would have been pleased to get the quality of letters that my kindergartners wrote today.

In extended-day schools, Little adds, educators get to spend plenty of time with students.

"We spend more time together than they spend with their families," Little says. "I know their learning styles, and we understand each other in ways other classes don't have time to develop."

DeLois Hoover, a kindergarten teacher, notes that the extra times gives educators time to nurture students.

"When I started out 14 years ago, if students could tell you the names of shapes and identify some letters, that was enough," says Hoover. "Now they have to count to 50 and practically be reading by the time they leave."

To meet these more demanding academic goals, Hoover points out, teachers have had to shortchange emotional developmental work. With the long day, there's room again for both academics and emotional development.

Second grade teacher Jim Wamboldt says the extended-day students don't get tired because they have so much variety.

"They're not just sitting there, looking at another book," he says. "They're moving constantly, making maps, going to the science teacher, doing art."

Specialists make it possible for classroom teachers to have a 50-minute prep period each day. Teachers in the same grade share the same prep time.

"It used to be, you would close your door and that was your little domain," Wamboldt says. "Here, everybody's constantly exchanging ideas."

State test scores now confirm teacher reports that student achievement has blossomed.

The Lakewood Intensive Learning Center was created after a 1997 proposal from Edison Schools to take over a district school and run it for profit. The Edison proposal included a longer day and year.

To help evaluate the proposal, the school board decided to visit selected Edison schools. Representatives from the NEA local affiliate, the Bellflower Education Association, and the local support staff union joined the board on the site visits.

Linda Little, then chair of the teacher

Idea Exchange

Pass the Project

My sixth grade science curriculum includes important diagrams—parts of a leaf, layers of the sun. As a review, we do an activity I call Five by Five.

The students work in groups of five. When I ring a bell, the first student begins to draw and label the diagram. After one minute, I ring the bell again, and the student passes the paper to the next student.

Students offer helpful hints, but only the designated student may work on the actual diagram during that minute.

The process continues for five minutes. The table with the best diagram gets a small prize.

It's a quick, effective, non-threatening review for students. For the teacher, it doesn't take any preparation or grading!

Susan Edge
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Hall Pass Agendas

Each of our sixth grade students carries an agenda book that contains a hall pass. On our team, we allow students to use their agenda 10 times per semester. A teacher must sign the pass for a student to go to the bathroom, their locker, the library, office, or nurse.

If students run an errand for a teacher, the agenda is signed in red ink and the trip doesn't count against them.

Students don't get into the hall without an agenda unless it's an emergency. And if there's a disaster—say, someone pulls a fire alarm—we can account for students' whereabouts.

Bonnie McMoran
Meridian, Idaho

Class Photographer

When my students are chosen as Star of the Week, they become the class photographer.

This student brings in a roll of film to snap pictures of classmates during the week, using an inexpensive camera I bought. Some pictures I suggest be taken, and some the student chooses. The photographer develops the film and designs a page for our class scrapbook.

Tracie Vanhoutan
Derby, Kansas

Works 4 Me
nea's e-mail classroom tip of the week!

Have a great idea? You can pass along your tips to *NEA Today*'s more than 2.4 million readers in one of five ways:

- By mail: *NEA Today*, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036
- By phone: 202/822-7201
- By fax: 202/822-7206
- By E-mail: Ideas@neatoday.nea.org
- Through the Web: www.nea.org/neatoday

local bargaining committee, went on several of the visits. She found that the Edison schools had good materials, but the staff had no input.

"They told you what to teach, how to teach it, and when to teach it," she says.

One school Little visited had recently eliminated naps for kindergartners—without consulting the teachers.

Little and her colleagues persuaded the school board that, with a significant investment, the district could create a truly superior, extended-day school on its own. The board agreed, and the Intensive Learning Center was born.

In the school's first year, teachers were paid for the extra 20 days they worked, but not for the extra 90 minutes in the school day.

"Some people said we were ideological fools for working all that extra time," Little recalls.

But the board agreed that, over the next three years, they would phase in full compensation for the 90 minutes.

Next year, under this schedule, teacher pay will range from $47,000 to more than $90,000.

"We understand each other in ways that a lot of classes don't have time to develop."
—Linda Little, kindergarten teacher, on extended-day schooling

The board has also hired specialists to teach computers, physical education, art, and Spanish.

The Intensive Learning Center differs from other schools in more ways than just scheduling, and some of these differences make teaching easier.

There's no special ed program, so students with disabilities can attend only if their parents waive special services, which some do. There's a strict discipline code and uniforms.

The students tend to come from families that are economically a little above average, although Principal Linda Gresik stresses that the school has students at all levels of academic ability.

There is one downside to the long days, however: "The kids bounce out of here at the end of the day, but the teachers are exhausted," says Little.

"You give so much energy," says Wamboldt. "It's not like an office job where you can go into your cubicle and take a breath."

"But what keeps us going," says Hoover, "is the excitement of how far they're going, and how much we can do." ✔

—Alain Jehlen

For more: Contact the Intensive Learning Center, 562/633-2096.

[DILEMMA]

How do you improve student attendance?

My students use a timeclock to track their attendance. I still take attendance in my own record book, but students enjoy clocking in and out of class as though it were a job. Timecards are totaled every two weeks, and, based on their attendance, students can earn up to 50 points toward their grade

I use the clock to monitor hall pass use, too.

If you're wondering how I could afford a timeclock, I couldn't. I wrote about 25 companies that sell them and asked for a donation. Two companies thought my idea was great and sent me one. I gave the extra to another teacher, and now we both use them.

Briana Johnson
High school biology teacher
Columbus, Ohio

■ At the end of each week, students who have not missed a day write their name on a ticket and place the ticket in a drawing box. Then I have a student pull a name.

The prize: A free homework pass, a coupon for a free day or extra credit points, school store gift certificates, pens, stickers.

Names not drawn stay in the box. This allows those students who have consistently good attendance a greater chance of winning. Every Friday, if I've forgotten to pull names, the students always remind me.

Michelle Plakosh
Marketing education coordinator
Warren, Ohio

■ Read to your classes. I read aloud every day from a high-interest novel. For my seventh graders, I read *The Giver*, *Among the Hidden*, and *Belle Prater's Boy*. To the eighth graders, I read *The Light in the Forest* and *Snowbound*. Most chapters end in suspense, and that brings the students back.

I choose books that are high interest, are not movies, and have not been read to them previously by another teacher.

Marlis Day
Seventh and eighth grade reading teacher
Petersburg, Indiana

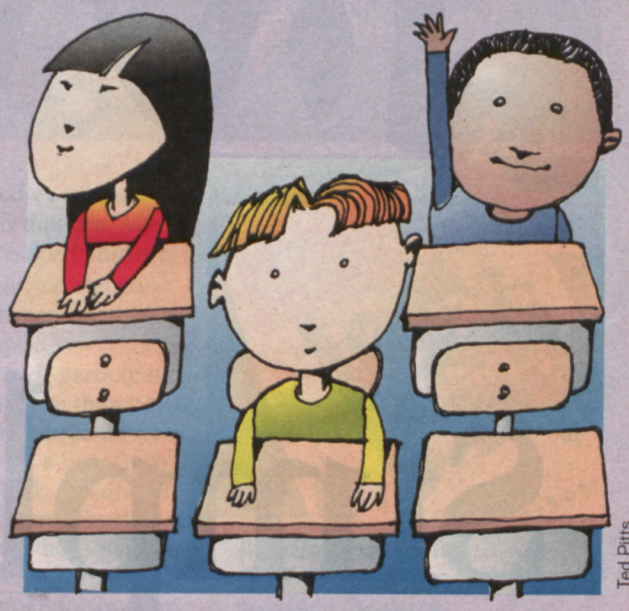
■ Since I started teaching four years ago, the best solution I've found is a pizza chart.

I post a chart of an empty pizza pan. Each day that every student in class comes to school on time, the class earns one piece of pizza. Although we don't often have these perfect, on-time days, attendance has improved.

Each time the class receives a piece of pizza on the chart, the students cheer out loud and are eager to come to school on time for the rest of the week. When all eight pieces are filled, we have a pizza party. I've found a local pizza place that gives us a great deal, since we're a school.

Shannon Tousignant
Second grade teacher
Fontana, California

■ When students are absent, I make sure and greet them with a "missed you yesterday!" when they return. I'll detain a student after class for a brief moment to ask specifically why the student was absent. Sometimes I then call home to check on a dubious answer.



Ted Pitts

Students don't like to be checked on, parents don't like to be bothered at home or at work, yet everyone appreciates the interest I've taken in the student. It works for me!

My students usually have very low absenteeism. Of course, a low pupil/teacher ratio allows me to get involved in ways that regular classroom teachers might find impossible to do. If everyone had smaller class sizes, attendance would improve.

Marie Varela
Elementary ESOL teacher
Dalton, Georgia

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"Real Teachers. . . are the only individuals who attend conferences and think it's routine to stand in long lines and sit on the floor to eat the boxed lunches."
— Bonnie Ahrens, Title1/Reading Recovery teacher, Chadron, Nebraska

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†Eligible NEA family members include parents, spouse (or domestic partner) and children.

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Reading for Remembrance

A Holocaust awareness project teaches students that reading can set you free.

Anne Frank's poignant diary puts a human face to the horrors of the Holocaust. A very special Read Across America project in New Jersey has deepened students' understanding of that reality by connecting to those tragic events one person at a time.

"When you tell children that 6 million people perished in the Holocaust, they have no concept of what that number means," says Katherine Bassett, a library media specialist who helped create the "Reading Sets You Free" project at Ocean City Intermediate School.

So, a few years ago, Bassett logged on and contacted Yad Vashem, an organization in Israel committed to preserving memories of the Holocaust and bringing the lessons of the Holocaust home. Within two days, Bassett was supplied with a listing of more than 600 names, ages, places of birth and death, and other information about Holocaust victims and survivors.

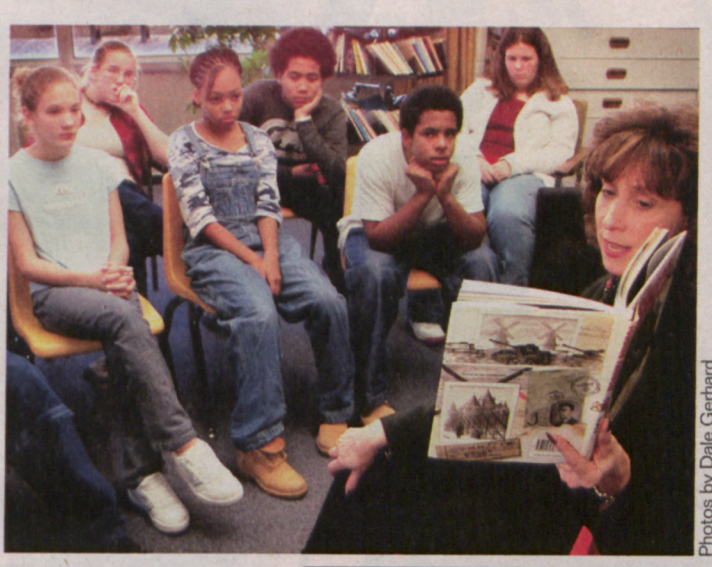
Using the names, students made business-sized cards adorned with butterflies, an international symbol of Holocaust remembrance. Fourth and fifth graders were given cards representing Holocaust survivors, while sixth through eighth graders were given names of victims as well.

"On Read Across America Day 1999, we began reading our way around the building in honor of the person named on our card," says Bassett. "Every time we read a book, we filled out a paper butterfly with the title read, our name, and the name of the person we read in honor of."

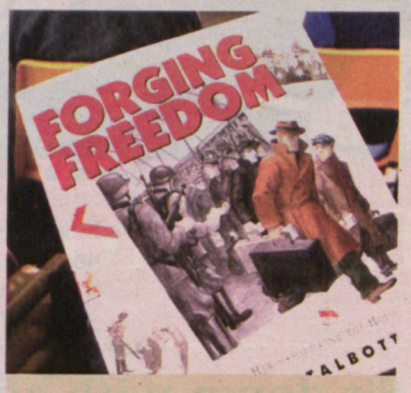
The reading project caught the imagination of the entire school, continuing until National Library Day in mid-April. Art and science teachers helped students make huge wooden butterflies painted with scientific accuracy. Language arts teachers focused on Holocaust-based novels, such as *Forging Freedom* by Hudson Talbott while social studies teachers taught on that era. Math teachers helped students compute price comparisons between the 1940s and today.

In the end, participants had read more than 1,600 books, and students were graced with a visit from Hannah Pick, childhood friend of Anne Frank and a survivor whose name had appeared on a card.

"She spoke for over an hour, and you could have heard a feather fall on the floor," recalls Bassett. "Students were enthralled. It was a wonderful history lesson for all." ✔



Photos by Dale Gerhard



Media specialist Katherine Bassett's project honors Holocaust victims.

For more: E-mail Katherine Bassett at read12me@aol.com or visit www.Yadvashem.org.

Pledge To Participate

A Reading Café. An essay contest. Family Literacy Night. Drop Everything and Read.

How are you planning to celebrate NEA's Read Across America on March 2?

How about sharing your ideas by logging onto www.nea.org/readacross/pledge.html and filling out your "Pledge to Participate."

Your ideas may then be highlighted on the state pages of the Read Across America Web site. Visit the site often—more ideas are being added every day. "Oh the Places You'll Go" when you pledge to participate in this year's Read Across America event!

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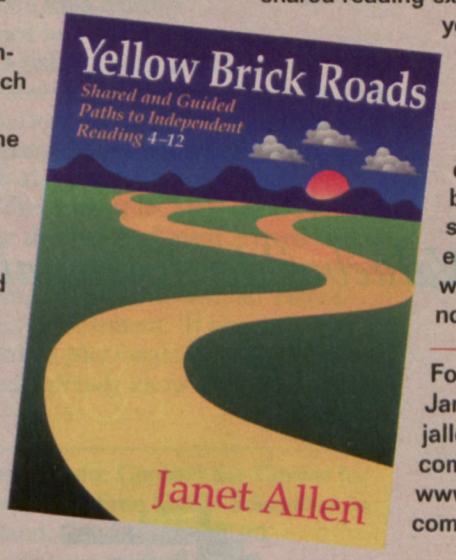
HOW TO...INCREASE READING SKILLS THROUGH RECORDED BOOKS

"Of all the things I did in my classroom, audiobooks made the single biggest difference in increasing reading ability in my students," says Janet Allen, author of *Yellow Brick Roads: Shared and Guided Paths to Independent Reading 4–12* (Stenhouse). Audiobooks, says Allen, bridge the gap between adolescent reading vocabulary and listening vocabulary, which is actually higher for struggling readers.

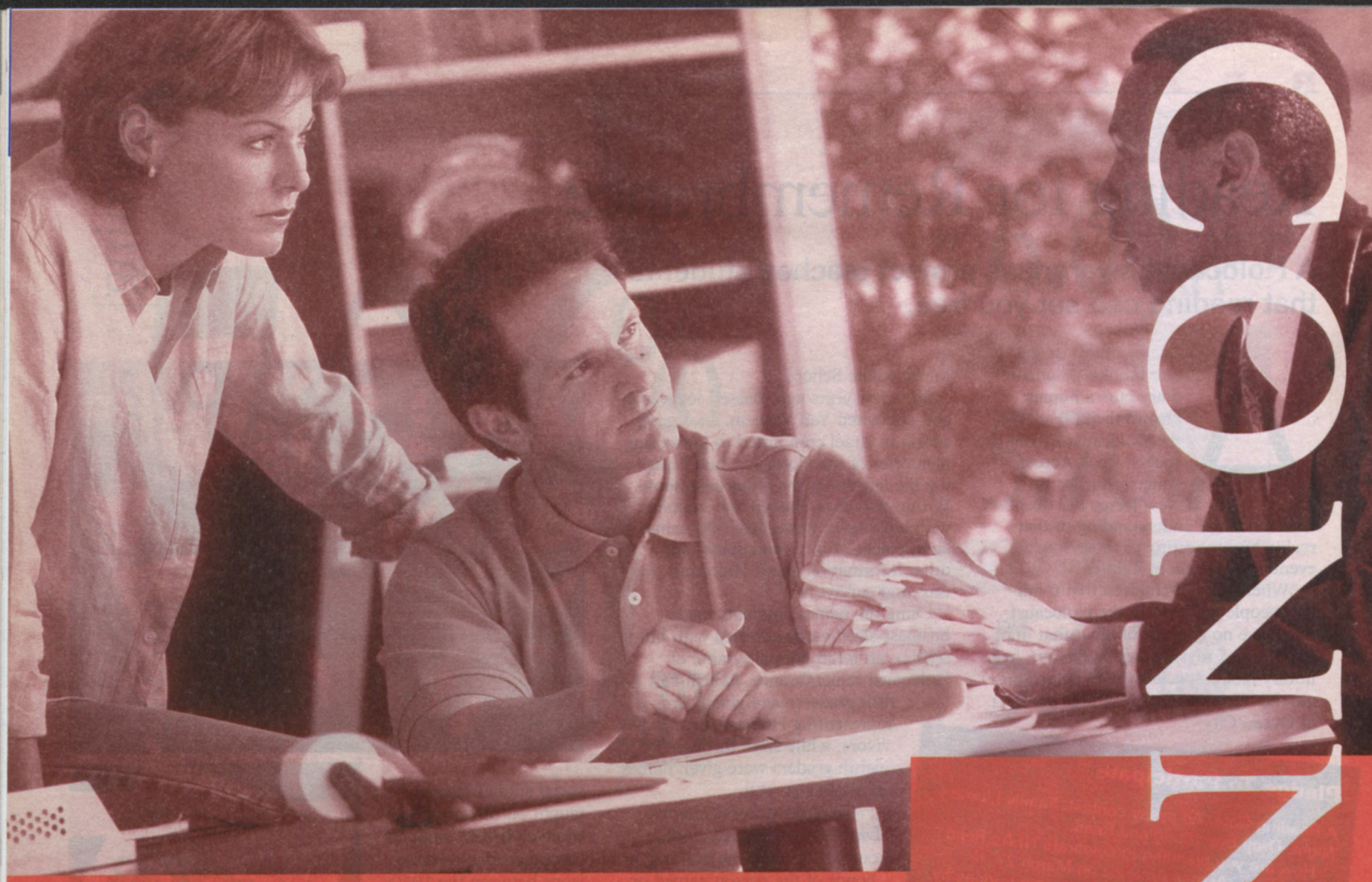
How can you increase reading comprehension with recorded books? Just listen:

- Let students use audiobooks during sustained reading time. Allow them to read along with the written text at their interest level.
- Content teachers can use recorded books to help struggling readers with research. Even works of fiction can give students background knowledge. For example, an audiotape of Christopher Paul Curtis's *The Watsons Go to Birmingham, 1963* can teach about the Alabama bombings and civil rights.
- Stock your media center with audiobooks that reflect core literature, so students can listen and follow along. Just hearing helps understanding more than reading silently, because there's another layer of meaning that comes from the voice. Even advanced placement students can benefit.
- Many recorded books are available at two speeds. The slower speed is perfect for students just learning English. Such tapes let students absorb the language without being monotonous.
- Make audiobooks and their companion texts a part of your in-school suspension program. Students can read an entire novel each day they spend there.

"Audiobooks replicate that shared reading experience that younger students get from read-aloud time," says Allen. "They can take older students back to the early stages of reading engagement, which many did not have."



For more: E-mail Janet Allen at jallen3219@aol.com or visit www.stenhouse.com.



FACE-TO-FACE COUNSELING

Sit down with an *NEA Valuebuilder* counselor to learn about the benefits of tax deferred savings.

Now is the perfect time to meet face-to-face with a trusted financial counselor and find out about all the benefits of the NEA Valuebuilder® Program.

Save on Taxes

When you connect with an NEA Valuebuilder Program representative, you'll learn more about the double tax advantages of pre-tax contributions and tax-deferred growth. By allowing more of your money to earn money, you can fight an investor's worst enemy, inflation. Your pre-tax contributions – plus earnings – continue to compound tax-deferred until you withdraw them as retirement income.

Additional Benefits

Your NEA Valuebuilder Program representative will also be happy to explain some of the many other benefits, such as:

- *Flexibility*–You choose the investment options you want
- *Portability*–Your account moves with you if you change jobs
- *Control*–You make your own decisions about investments and withdrawal options

Call today and arrange a personal consultation with a trusted NEA Valuebuilder counselor. You'll get the answers you need to design the plan that's best for you.

Call toll-free today to make an appointment with an NEA Valuebuilder financial representative

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VBNT0201

Channel One Still Raises Hackles

Corporations are paying top dollar for teenage eyeballs.

In 1989, Christopher Whittle launched Channel One, a for-profit TV news program beamed directly into America's secondary schools, despite a storm of protests over the commercials accompanying the news. More than a decade later, Channel One is still in operation—and still controversial.

Who owns Channel One now?
Channel One was sold for $250 million in 1994 to Primedia, a company that publishes *Seventeen* and about 250 other magazines.

What does Channel One offer?
A participating school gets satellite dishes, wiring, two VCRs, and television monitors

for every classroom, plus a daily news program designed for teenagers. A sampling of news reports aired last spring:

Israel withdraws from Lebanon.

South Carolina takes the Confederate flag off its state house.

Children whose parents are on drugs tell their stories.

What does Channel One get in exchange?
Teenage eyeballs, a valuable prize for advertisers. Among the ads:

A spike-haired duck plugs Bubble Yum gum.

A velociraptor beats Vince Carter of the Toronto Raptors at basketball, and Carter decides he needs more Gatorade.

Two teens on a date try to kiss while wearing paper bags over their heads to hide acne, which they wouldn't have to do if they used pHisoderm.

The ads are often expensively produced and get more student attention than the news. According to the *Washington Post*, a 30-second ad on Channel One can go for $200,000.

The Channel One contract with schools stipulates that a participating school must show the program when students are in class. Most schools show Channel One during homeroom, to avoid intruding on teaching time.

Who are the big supporters and detractors?
Opponents span the ideological spectrum, ranging from traditional corporate watchdogs like the Consumers' Union, to the Southern Baptist Convention and Phyllis Schlafly of the Eagle Forum. They're united on one theme: It's wrong to subject a captive audience of school children to commercial advertisement.

Promoters argue that so long as the messages are not offensive, and the news reporting is good, Channel One can be a resource for cash-starved school districts.

How is Channel One actually used in schools?
In a variety of ways. At Darnall High School in Geneseo, Illinois, teacher Tom Steele uses Channel One to start discussions on current events. The students have all watched the same program, he explains, and they have a common set of facts.

Steele, Channel One's "Teacher of the News" last year, is concerned about the ads, but thinks they're less offensive than they used to be.

At Charleston High School in Charleston, Illinois, the daily Channel One program is broadcast during a "tutorial" period when students are encouraged to get extra help from teachers. That means many students don't watch, although the TV is on.

Charleston social studies teacher Rick Everett does watch the program, to see whether there's a segment he wants to use. If so, he has the school staff replay it for his classes. During the repeat, Everett can sometimes avoid the ads.

"If I turn it off right after the first segment, I can say 'No, thank you' to Snickers,'" he points out.

At the Washington Middle School in Seattle, the Channel One contract has expired, but teachers can still get the programs if they want to. No one does.

"Kids watch way too much television to begin with," says teacher Richard Katz. "Plus, I'm not thrilled about ads targeted to kids."

Instead of television news, Katz uses newspapers from around the world to teach current events.

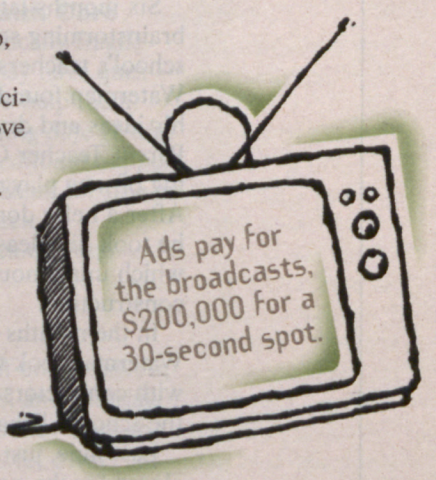
Washington Middle School sixth-grade teacher Marcy Shadow has created a "Jeopardy"-style current events game that has her students reading newspapers at home, even when they're not assigned.

"I really can't afford to take time away from instruction for Channel One," she says.

The television monitor is still on her classroom wall, but "I hang a colorful Chinese scarf in front of it so it doesn't show."

Is commercialization of public schools, spearheaded by Channel One, a threat to education?
The more than 9,000 delegates to the 1993 NEA Representative Assembly thought so—and voted that the Association should try to stop it.

Channel One's commercialization has helped clear the way for commercial-laden posters, book covers (distributed by another Primedia division), school Web sites, and lesson plans. Campbell's Soup, for instance, has developed and promoted a science experiment to prove that its spaghetti sauce is thicker than a rival's.



A 1997 *Business Week* article—"This Lesson Is Brought To You By..."—offered this vignette of the rising tide of commercialism in schools: "In Broward County, Florida, 10-year-old Travis Licata recently learned how to design a McDonald's..., how a McDonald's works, and how to apply and interview for a job at McDonald's, thanks to a seven-week company-sponsored class intended to teach kids about the work world.

"[The school] let McDonald's in because the fast-food giant arrived with a curriculum... that would cost the school nothing. Was it worthwhile? Here's Travis's assessment: 'If you want to work in a McDonald's when you grow up, you already know what to do.'" ✔

—Alain Jehlen

For more info: Contact the Center for Commercial-Free Public Education in Oakland, CA, 510/268-1100, www.commercialfree.org.

Illustrations by Steve Walters Parrish

TEAMWORK

'Mr. Bob' Makes a Dream Come True

A ho-hum school takes on a new life, thanks to school custodian Bob Waterman.

For the 10 years that custodian Bob Waterman has been working at Sacred Heart Public School in Lebanon, New Hampshire, he's dreamed of making his school more kid-friendly.

"It looked like a prison," he says, about this 100-year-old building that once housed a Catholic school. "If you can imagine an old two-story brick building surrounded by an eight-foot high chainlink fence, where even the playground is paved with asphalt, then you are picturing Sacred Heart."

Over the years "Mr. Bob," as the K-12 students affectionately call him, used what he learned in a high school architecture class to doodle ideas on paper for making Sacred Heart more modern. He envisioned grass and curved walkways, flowers and trees.

Last year, Waterman's paper drawings became real.

"I was tired of seeing so many kids getting injured on the blacktop, enough was enough," he says. "So I took a drawing to the principal and asked him how to get the funds needed to turn our school into one we would all be proud of."

Six months later, after numerous brainstorming sessions with the school's teachers, staff, and parents, Waterman found himself presenting his ideas and drawings to the local Parent Teacher Organization for funding of new playground equipment. After a hefty donation for the cause, he took his ideas to the school board, which unanimously agreed to fund construction.

In the months that followed, Waterman took the lead in working with contractors and city officials on the school's behalf.

Last June, just one day after school closed for the summer, Waterman watched as construction crews ripped up pavement and started the makeover. In just three months, the school was transformed.

This fall, grass, flowers, and park benches replaced pavement at Sacred Heart. Curved paths lead to the school door; the play areas have new and safer equipment surrounded by bark mulch. A grass field where kids can actually play sits behind the school.

"So many people volunteered their time and energy to make this come together," he says. "There was a lot of sweat."

The payoff came as children returned in September.

"I'm not a sentimental guy, but what I witnessed on those children's faces the day they came back to school still chokes me up," he says.

"One little girl told her mom, 'Look at how beautiful my school is.'"

Adds Waterman: "I always thought school should be a place for the community, and now that's happening here. Before we did all this, I used to get to school Monday morning and find vandalism and empty beer cans. Parents didn't bring their kids to the school to play on Saturdays because there was no place to play. Now it seems families are here all the time, which is exactly what I had hoped would happen."

Next up? A reconstruction of the school library. Waterman will build a mini amphitheater so the children have a fun place to sit during story time.

"I'm always looking at how we can better utilize our space so the kids will benefit," he says. "While I don't think becoming a school architect is in my immediate future, I hope to volunteer my knowledge at other schools that need a little help. It's so important to me that kids have a good place to learn, and I'm going to use all of the resources in my power to make sure they do." ✔

Carol Castarphen

What a difference custodian Bob Waterman made at his 100-year-old school, where landscaping and new playground equipment are now in place.

Going the Extra Mile

What's it like to serve 700 meals to children? Or tune a bus? School board members, assistant superintendents, and a PTA president in Florida found out last November as they shadowed cafeteria workers, bus drivers, and school secretaries as part of the Escambia-NEA ESP's program, "Walk in Our Shoes."

The annual event, held in conjunction with Education Support Personnel Day during American Education Week, raises awareness about the importance of the "behind the scenes" jobs that allow teachers to teach and students to achieve, says UniServ director Ellen Lawrence.

"It started two years ago in response to a school board member who was pushing privatization for

TEAM PLAYER

A Passion for Poetry

Name: David Arnold

Job Title: Janitor at Brownstown Elementary School in south central Illinois for 18 years, and former president of the Brownstown ESP Association.

On the Side: I write poetry. I've written over 100 poems, but the ones I most like to write are for other ESP members, who seldom get thanked for doing the hard work they do. I've written at least 10 poems for all types of ESP jobs so far. Some of the poems are on the NEA ESP Web site, which has prompted members from around the country to E-mail me and ask if I will create poems specifically for their positions, like a recess aid, bus mechanic, and a school bus aid. I even won fifth place in a national competition for my poem, "Just a Janitor." I feel so fortunate to be able to do this, to show ESP everywhere my appreciation for everything they do.

Special Concerns: Making sure children stay in school. I was local Association president when I read an article that kind of shocked me.

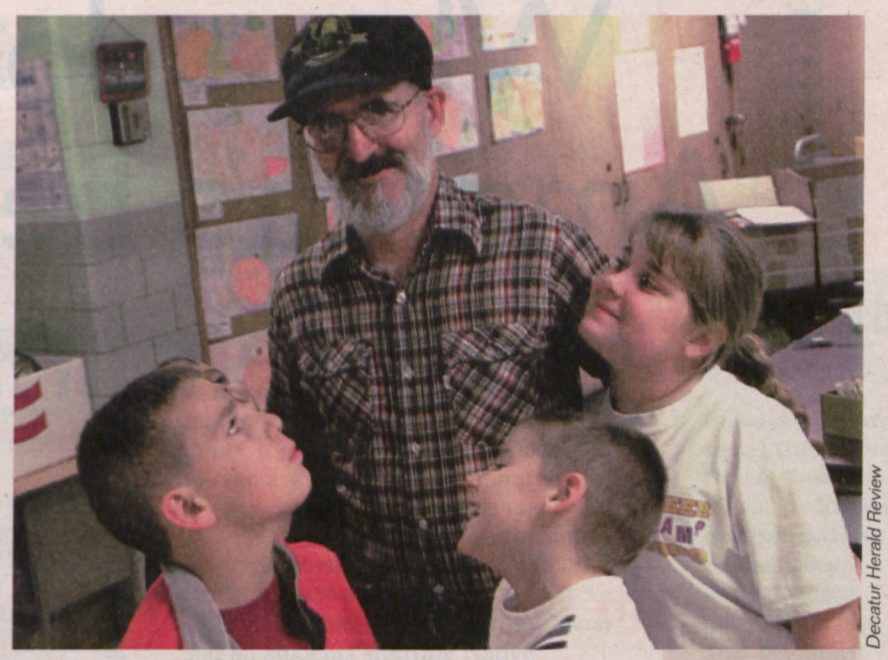
It said that at least 60 percent of prison inmates never finished high school. Shortly after I read that, the figures came out on the dropout rates in our own high school—which were at 10 percent. In a district of 500 children, that's just heartbreaking.

So I created my own black-and-white poster to put up in the high school which read "Some Places Don't Require a Good Education," with a picture of an inmate behind bars.

The poster got a lot of people's attention, and the state Association distributed it around Illinois. I've been creating posters for American Education Week for five years now.

Biggest Passion: The Association. I've helped organize three ESP locals, including my own. I've also served on two state committees and on the ESP council.

I keep reminding people that with the Association we bargain, without it, we beg. It's also a great way to meet other support personnel and develop a network of friends. ✔



Decatur Herald Review

Illinois custodian Dave Arnold writes poems about the value of ESP work.

RESOURCES

Show You Care
Looking for a special way to acknowledge members in your NEA local affiliate? Do what the Edison (N.J.) Education Association recently did: Copy David Arnold's poems (see "Team Player" above) for fellow janitors, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and school secretaries onto parchment paper, frame them, and give them to your colleagues for any occasion. They work especially well as gifts for American Education Week. You can find the poems on the NEA Web site: http://www.nea.org/esp/jobs/poetry.htm.

Calling All Bus Drivers
Are you a bus driver looking to share your experiences and resources with other bus drivers around the country? Try the "School Bus Driver" Web site at http://user.mc.net/hyden.

Is This Real?
Have you ever gotten an E-mail, and wondered if it's real? For example, Bill Gates offering you money if you pass on his E-mail to others, or warnings about hypodermic needles being attached to the underside of gas pump handles?

Those claims, and many more like them, are totally false according to HoaxBusters, a public service of the CIAC Team and the U.S. Department of Energy. To check on a questionable offer or claim, go to http://computer-connection.net/~dkweb/Hobus/Hobus.htm. The Web site lists hoaxes by category and you can search by topic.

Providing Safe Health Care
Do you work with medically fragile children? If yes, you may have questions about how best to help them. The NEA book, *Providing Safe Health Care: The Role of Educational Support Personnel*, can now be read for free on the NEA Web site. Check it out at http://www.nea.org/esp/resource/safecare.htm.

Check This Out
Looking for a source of online novels, newspapers, magazines, and tutorials for students? Then you may want to check out www.ipl.org. for a vast collection of online resources.

our transportation services," says Lawrence. "We knew if they walked in our shoes, even just for a day, they would realize how important our jobs are."

Escambia County PTA President Cathy Roche was humbled by the experience.

"I thought I knew what driving a bus would be like from driving my own van with five kids," she said. "But from this point forward, I'm going to start saluting bus operators everywhere."

Escambia-NEA ESP are members of three local NEA affiliates.

Santa came early for hundreds of children in Michigan last December, thanks to charitable efforts by the Lansing Educational Assistants (LEA). More than 1,000 hats, mittens, gloves, and socks were given to Lansing students in need of warm clothing for the winter, as part of the local's first "Warm Hands, Warm Feet" project.

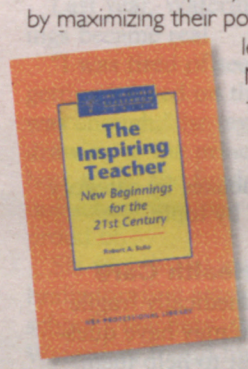
"We've traditionally done fundraisers and charitable events with the teachers Association, but this year we wanted to do something on our own to show how much our group cares about the community," says LEA President David Hockaday, the leader of the 540-member paraprofessional local.

Where do some of America's best teachers get their inspiration?

From the NEA Professional Library, that's where!

With all of the distractions facing kids today, it takes an inspiring teacher to keep students motivated and excited to learn. Whether you're an experienced teacher or new to the field, the NEA Professional Library has the resources you need to revitalize your classroom!

In ***The Inspiring Teacher*** you'll learn how to inspire your students by maximizing their potential to learn.



Maximizing that potential means, for starters, understanding brain-based learning — the latest research on how kids learn most easily and effectively. You'll also find in ***The Inspiring Teacher*** helpful tips on forming real-world alliances with colleagues and parents – and get guidance on how to hone the skills you need to effectively resolve conflict.

168 pp., Item #2955-0-00-D
Nonmembers $16.95
NEA Members **$14.95**

How can you teach your students to learn without turning your class into a study skills lab?

Inspiring Independent Learning shows you how to foster independent learning in your classroom through easy, often subtle, techniques that gently place responsibility for learning in the hands of the students. This book offers numerous strategies to use with students in grades K-12, as well as activities and record forms for classroom use. Special questionnaires and scoring guides will help you assess your students' metacognitive and study skills. And a peer tutoring manual will help you train peer tutors to be study skill coaches.

151 pp., Item #2954-2-00-D
Nonmembers $12.95
NEA Members **$10.95**

Take control of your classroom today! The restructured, diverse classrooms of today require a confident mastery of modern classroom management theory and research — tested in everyday practice. Besides a unique glossary of strategies, ***Inspiring Discipline: A Practical Guide for Today's Classrooms*** features sections on dissolving antagonism and resentment, recognizing and respecting people's limits, and using positive interventions. This guide will help you improve teaching and learning by giving you a broad base of behavior management strategies for inspiring discipline!

128 pp., Item #2950-X-00-D
Nonmembers $12.95
NEA Members **$10.95**

Order all three and save 20 percent!

Priced separately, these books cost $36.85, but this "inspiring" set is available at a special price of $29.50 for NEA members only ($34.50 for nonmembers). Item #2956-9-00-D. Order before February 15, 2001 and get a free *Bread and Roses 2001* calendar featuring the art of Ralph Fasanella.

Order the Inspiring Set
online at www.nea.org/books
or call 800-229-4200.
Shipping and handling will be added to all orders.

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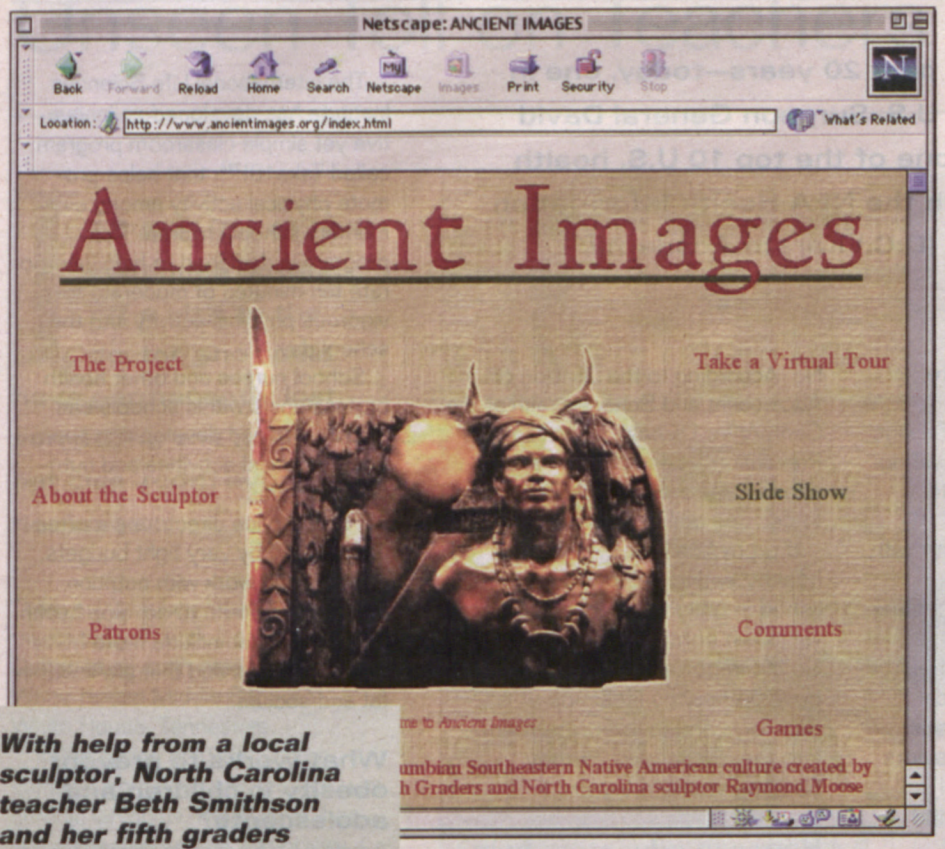
Learning

Finding Native American Culture



With help from a local sculptor, North Carolina teacher Beth Smithson and her fifth graders designed a Web site that tracks the culture of the Cherokee tribe.

The students researched the images in depth, took two field trips, and under Moose's direction, created a clay tile and a plaster mold of the tile of a chosen image. Moose created the central bronze relief sculpture.

The Web site explains the project, made possible by a grant from the North Carolina Arts Council and community contributions. But more importantly, it allows students and teachers to take a virtual tour of the mural.

They can actually focus on one of the 212 tiles and gain useful information about the images that were so important to Cherokee culture.

Social studies teachers, art teachers, and all students studying Native Americans will find this a valuable learning tool.

For more information, send comments to me through the Web site, www.ancientimages.org, or E-mail me at beths@vnet.net.

Beth Smithson
Mt. Pleasant Elementary
Mt. Pleasant, North Carolina

My favorite Web site

I like a site (my own) that covers these themes: plate tectonics, mapping, time zones, dinosaurs, chemistry, weather, and particle physics. It includes questions and links to find answers. Go to www.oneimage.com/~mcdave/stdntassgnm.html.

Dave Crowder
Science teacher
Lafayette, Colorado

Come Join Us

We have just launched a collaborative Internet project to learn more about the United States. We are asking schools from each of the 50 states to participate.

The participating school will receive a foam-board cutout of their state, which they will decorate with items that reflect the landmarks, industries, and culture of their states.

When finished projects are returned to us, we'll create a giant map of the United States. Each project will also be scanned and shared through our project Web site. The project address is www.evesham.k12.nj.us/evans/states/states.htm.

We would love to have a school in every state participate.

Karen Biddinger
F. V. Evans Elementary
Marlton, New Jersey

All in One Place

NEA Today is a valuable treasure trove of ideas and information. The listing of so many Web sites is one of the magazine's most valuable assets. After reading the articles, it's time to surf the Web.

But... there are some problems. This month's edition gets left in the car, it sits in the living room and coffee rings obscure the addresses, the magazine makes a dandy hat during a sudden rainstorm, and finally, Oregon is a paper-is-fuel state and much as we hate to say it, sometimes the issue ends up in the fireplace.

Enter the Scio District Web!!! Each *NEA Today* edition's Web sites are listed and pre-linked for easy access for all employees and any member of the public who can find the Teachers' Services section of the Main Web.

We refresh the page after each issue. You can find our link page at www.scio.k12.or.us/SHS/teacherserevices/NEA_Today.htm.

Craig Hamnquist
Scio High School
Scio, Oregon

Truly Multimedia

Last year my fifth graders, a high school senior, and myself designed a Web site featuring a multimedia mural the students had created with a sculptor-in-residence, Raymond Moose, the previous year.

The mural is permanently installed and reflects the culture of Southeastern pre-Columbian Native Americans, focusing on a North Carolina tribe, the Cherokee.

TALK TO US

Have a nifty classroom tip or lesson plan that uses technology? E-mail a description (under 200 words, please!) to wired-classroom@list.nea.org.

Is there a Web site, CD-ROM, or piece of software you can't live without? E-mail your favorites—and why you love them—to myfavoritetech@list.nea.org.

Or send your responses by regular mail to *NEA Today*, or by Fax to 202/822-7206, or through the Web at www.nea.org/cet.

Those published here will receive a sparkling *NEA Today* mug!

Bytes for Beginners

I don't know very much about the Web, so when a friend suggested that I join an "education portal" I asked: What is a portal, and does NEA have one that I can join?

Portals are often the first page that loads when you start up your Web browser (Netscape Navigator, Microsoft Internet Explorer, etc.).

The term "Web portal" began to be used to describe mega-sites such as Yahoo, Excite, MSN, Netscape Netcenter, and AOL, because many users used them as a "starting point" or "entry point" for Web surfing. The term "search engine" had become inadequate to describe the breadth of the offerings of these leading Internet destinations, although search and navigation are still pivotal to most people's online experience. (AOL is a bit different: it's always been an Internet access provider, in addition to being a network of proprietary Internet content and services.)

Your friend most likely recommended that you join a portal because of the plethora of "free," customizable services and functionality they offer visitors, helping folks navigate and extract from the Net information resources they need, when and where they need them.

Portal offerings can include Internet search and navigation; E-mail; customized news, weather, sports, and horoscopes; planners, calendars, and contact managers; real-time chat; message boards; and original content on every imaginable topic. Many also offer shopping, free home pages, "clubs," and even small business services.

NEA is designing its education portal, and it promises to offer something for every education stakeholder. Exactly when NEA's portal will launch is not known at this point—but most likely it will be sometime next summer.

Student Weight: Heavy Burden

Obesity in youth has doubled over the past 20 years—today, one in five children is overweight or obese. U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher has declared youth obesity one of the top 10 U.S. health priorities. Robert Kaiser, on staff with the NEA Health Information Network and chief instructor at the Washington (D.C.) Karate Academy, surveys the state of weight in American kids.

What are the primary causes of overweight and obesity in youth?

We haven't identified all of the reasons for the current epidemic of overweight and obesity among our nation's youth. But research has shown today's children are exercising less, eating more calorie-filled foods, and sitting for longer periods either in front of the television or a computer screen.

According to the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, 25 percent of U.S. children spend four hours or more watching television every day.

Shrinking school budgets have either reduced physical education classes or eliminated them all together. Newly built communities often lack sidewalks where children can walk or ride their bicycles.

Does being overweight affect a student's ability to learn?

Being overweight or obese may have a significant negative impact on a student's academic performance.

Children who are overweight or obese have more illnesses and tend to be less physically active than children who are at their appropriate weight. They tend to miss more days of school and then have to make up for lost class time.

The effects of obesity have the potential to snowball. Students who suffer more illness and have poorer health habits are more likely to drop out of school and maintain their unhealthy practices into adulthood. That, in turn, puts them at increased risk for diabetes, heart disease, colon cancer, high blood pressure, and subsequently premature death.

In its statement on physical education, the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports states that "research supports our firm conviction that strong healthy bodies promote learning and enhance mental and emotional health, social development, self-esteem, and overall fitness in youth."

What role does self-esteem play in becoming overweight—and in returning to a properly proportional weight?

A healthy self-esteem and self-image are critical components in the willingness and effort a child puts into healthy behaviors.

We see children all the time with poor self-esteem who have become complacent and accepting of their own bad eating habits, their weight problems, and their lack of participation in physical activity. Poor self-esteem leads to other dangerous risk behaviors such as tobacco and alcohol use, unsafe sexual activity, and violence.

Won't many overweight kids just grow out of their weight problem?

No. According to the Division of Adolescent and School Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, obese children and adolescents are more likely to go on to become obese adults.

If a physically active lifestyle and healthy eating habits are established in childhood, these patterns will often continue into adulthood. So it's important for children to develop healthy lifestyles at an early age and incorporate them into their daily lives as they become young adults.

How can educators help?

School-based programs can make a significant positive impact on the nutrition and physical activities of students nationwide.

Tammy Smith

The International Life Sciences Institute has developed an innovative yet simple classroom program called Take10!™, that helps promote physical activity among elementary school children. This program is designed to help incorporate ten minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity into the school day.

School nurses and other health professionals within schools can help design and develop age appropriate physical activities and nutrition programs.

Food service directors are often constrained by very tight budgets, but they can work with nutrition experts and youth to develop healthier lunches that include more fruits and vegetables and that are lower in fat and sodium.

What works to prevent obesity in children and adolescents?

Adults who have a significant role in a child's life can encourage more physical activity and less television watching. Other tips that can be relayed:

- Walking every day for 20 to 30 minutes is very helpful for improving and maintaining good health.
- Stop eating before you're full and feeling "stuffed."
- Eat only half portions at restaurants that serve oversized portions.
- Exercise before eating, since this helps burn the already stored fat. ✔

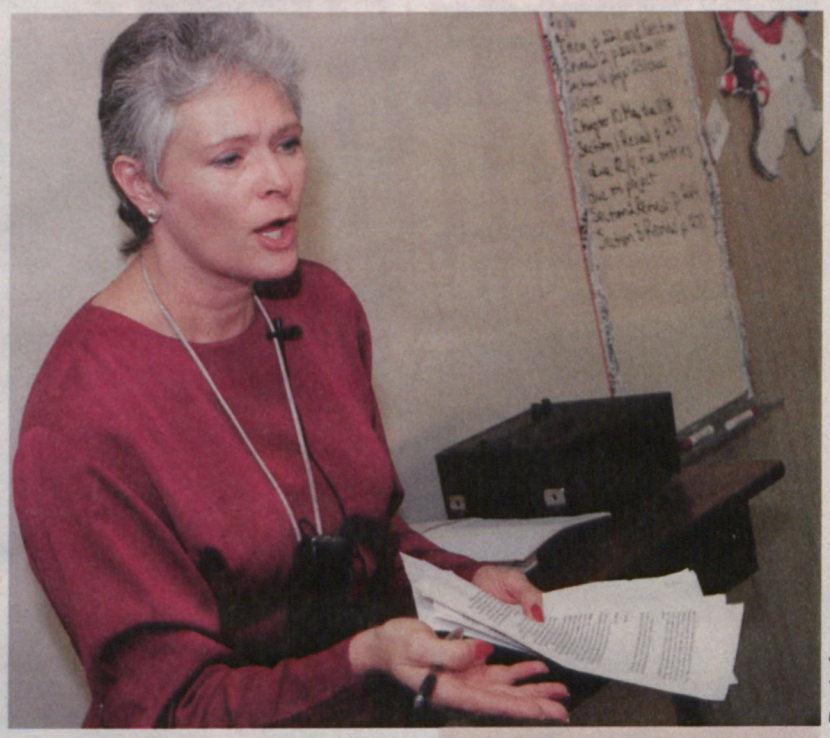
RESOURCES:

- **For more information on the International Life Sciences Institute classroom program Take10!™, visit the Web at www.ilsi.org.**
- **Information at www.obesity.com provides commonsense advice on how to avoid fad diets, eat reasonably in restaurants that tend to pile it on, and how to get active. Articles include "Walking: Humanity's Oldest Exercise Helps Control Weight."**
- **For a copy of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports physical education statement and accompanying fact sheet, visit www.indiana.edu/~preschal/ council.html.**

This comprehensive site also links to research reports on fitness and to the general report *Toward a Better Understanding of Physical Fitness & Activity*. The site also provides information on modifications that can be made in fitness qualifying requirements for students with physical disabilities.

Vocal Strain Can Take Unseen Toll on Teachers

If Susan Dalton had continued putting off a visit to the doctor, she could have permanently lost something she needs in her classroom everyday: her voice.



Dan Loftin

Susan Dalton thought her voice was simply strained from hours of teaching. She actually had nodules on her vocal chords. Now, she uses a microphone to project her lectures.

"Like any teacher, I was hesitant to take a day off work," says Susan Dalton, a seventh grade teacher at White House Middle School in White House, Tennessee.

In the spring of 1995, Dalton suffered from what she thought was chronic laryngitis. Many days, her voice became hoarse. On other days, she could not speak at all.

Dalton put off seeing a doctor. But after two months, when it finally became clear that the hoarseness was not going away, Dalton eventually visited Dr. Mark Courey of the Vanderbilt Voice Clinic in Nashville.

Courey discovered nodules developing on Dalton's vocal chords. After a year of voice therapy produced no improvement, Dalton had surgery to have the vocal nodules removed. Without the surgery, Dalton could have permanently lost her voice.

"I always had sore throats. I didn't think it was anything out of the ordinary," says Dalton.

Many teachers may suffer from the same condition as Dalton—and, like her, incorrectly believe that it's something less serious.

"Greater teacher awareness in the area of proper voice use is long overdue," says Courey, whose clients include country music artists. About 10 percent of his patients are teachers—a figure that belies the extent of the problem, Courey notes, since a high percentage of teachers complain about generic "voice problems."

"The classroom setting is very demanding," says Courey. A combination of the classroom environment and the teacher's behavior can lead to vocal strain.

To prevent damage to the vocal chords, Courey suggests paying attention to symptoms, which include neck pain and roughness in the voice.

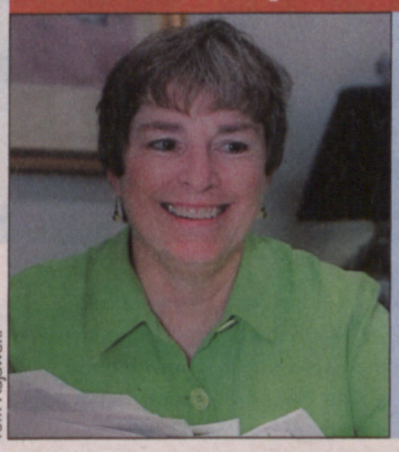
Teachers should never get to the point where they are hoarse at the end of each day, says Courey. "If the hoarseness persists for more than two weeks, it should get checked," he adds.

Dalton, in her 12th year of teaching, now uses more non-verbal cues in class and has reorganized her lessons to provide for less time speaking. When she does speak to the class, she uses a microphone and transmitter clipped to her lapel, and her lectures are broadcast through a nearby speaker. And Dalton continues her rehabilitation. ✔

—Marc Pilotin

Quick Tip

Joan Deguire North



Tom Kujawski

On handling stress and improving the quality of work life:

■ Watch for stress. You won't use any stress management strategies if you're not aware that stress is eating at you. Know your symptoms.

■ If you're in a full-blown stress attack, first take several deep breaths and consciously relax all muscles. Think about something larger, like waves on a beach or a new nephew. These actions help distance you from the stressing situation. After that, you can engage in problem-solving or find friends who lull you back to yourself.

■ A while back, I vowed to do one kindness a day at work before I would allow myself to go home at night. The effect was miraculous.

Joan Deguire North, dean of the College of Professional Studies and a professor of education at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, has taught courses in stress management.

NEA HIN

From the **NEA Health Information Network**

■ Cancer Survivors

The NEA Health Information Network is looking for input on the formation of an NEA Cancer Survivors Caucus. If you're interested in providing feedback on what a Survivors Caucus could offer, please visit http://neahin.org/wwwboard/. Watch this page for future announcements about caucus initiatives.

■ American Heart Month

March is American Heart Month, a time to take special notice of coronary heart disease—America's No. 1 killer. Reduce your risk factors, know the warning signs, and know how to respond quickly if warning signs occur. For more information contact the American Heart Association at 800/AHA-USA1 or visit www.americanheart.org.

■ Adolescent Directory Online

Indiana University Center for Adolescent Studies provides Adolescent Directory Online, a collection of electronic resources aimed at helping parents, educators, researchers, health practitioners, and teens. Visit www.educ.indiana.edu/cas/adol/atod.html.s.com.

■ Kids Health Page

Educators and parents can tap a colorful U.S. Food and Drug Administration Web site on health issues (www.fda.gov/ocopacom/kids/). Kids can take quizzes on food, drugs, medicine, and tobacco. They can read about FDA investigators, vaccines, and how to properly care for a pet. Eighteen teen health articles are provided, with topics including acne, menstruation, and eating disorders.

■ Health Groups

The Society of State Directors of Health, Physical Education and Recreation maintains a list of national organizations working in health education, physical education, and broader fields of health and education. Visit www.thesociety.org.

Fighting for Mother Nature

A retired teacher takes up the fight to preserve Wisconsin's natural resources from becoming just another shelf of bottled waters.

Mark Hoffman

After 48 years of teaching, **Joan Christopherson-Schmidt** retired—and immediately jumped into a battle to preserve the pristine water of Big Springs near her Wisconsin Dells family farm.

Christopherson-Schmidt, who turned 70 last July 4 while a delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly in Chicago, spent her first official day of retirement testifying before the Wisconsin State Senate.

The issue: Whether Perrier/Nestle should be allowed to mine Wisconsin's spring waters for a new brand of bottled water.

Christopherson-Schmidt inherited 160 acres of marshland from her father. He made her promise never to let anyone drain or commercialize it, saying, "that land is for the animals, plant life, and water of the state of Wisconsin. We don't really own the land, we're only renters and must leave it as good or better than we found it for our children and grandchildren."

"Ms. Chris," as her Milwaukee students liked to call her, taught art, English, drama, and debate from the preschool level all the way through college.

"As educators," Christopherson-Schmidt says, "we must help children learn to appreciate and respect their environment and its natural beauty. That way they won't destroy it. They'll help protect it for the future."

Perrier recently received a permit from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to tap Big Springs water at a rate of 500 gallons per minute without getting an environmental impact study.

Christopherson-Schmidt is part of a group called Concerned Citizens of Newport, a leading force for preserving the land. CCN is suing DNR for failing in its public trust to protect Wisconsin's waters.

"The fight is worth it to me," she explains. "Wetlands are important to the environment, and if we lose this fight, we lose the environment." ✔

For more information and free documentary video, E-mail hirok8@aol.com or go to www.saveamericaswater.com; phone 608/253-7266 or 414/961-2200.

Putting a Face on Kosovo Tragedy

For nearly two decades, **Jill Cerqueira** has studied and taught the Holocaust as a history teacher in Holmdel, New Jersey. Last summer, she did something not many would be brave enough to do. Amid the swirl of guerrilla warfare, ethnic cleansing, and NATO's peacekeeping mission, Cerqueira and a colleague visited Kosovo.

"I wanted to see first-hand the most recent genocide in European history," she says. "I wanted to bring that experience back to my students by establishing some type of cultural exchange program between my students and students in Kosovo."

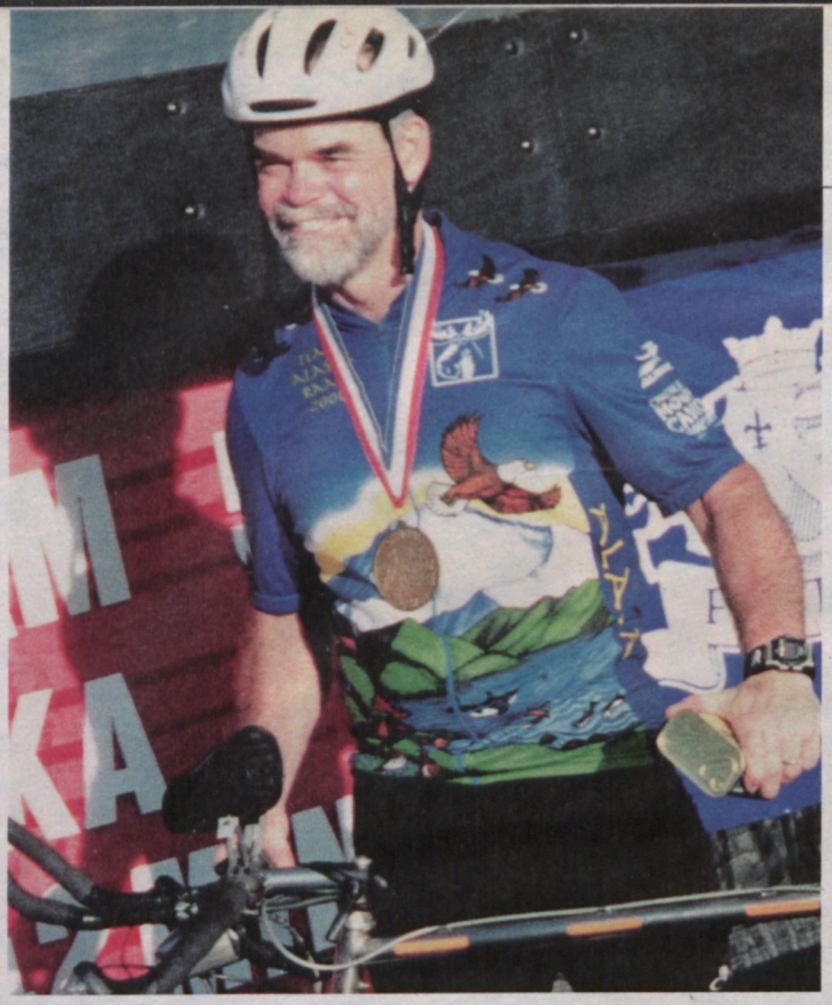
Because of her efforts, Holmdel High School teenagers are now in constant contact with teenagers at two schools on the other side of the world, one Albanian and one Serbian. They exchange letters, E-mail, videos, music, and even holidays.

"It's totally awakened my students to what is happening in the world," Cerqueira says. "And it's making them realize how much we all have in common."

Cerqueira's students have heard from an 18-year-old soldier who wrote about his experiences living in a combat area. Other E-mails confirm that Madonna is just as popular in Kosovo as she is in the United States.

"It's always better if teachers can teach reality, and that's what I'm doing," says Cerqueira. "Instead of reading about how destructive hate and prejudice are, they hear this from kids directly experiencing it.

"My students are able to visualize themselves in their new friends' shoes," adds Cequeira, "It's a powerful lesson to learn." ✔



Just Another Ride in Paradise

Believing that being a good role model is a good way to influence students, Alaska special education teacher **Bob Voris** embarked on a trip last June that would take him across the country. That trip, Voris hopes, will now inspire the students he coaches to pursue lifelong fitness activity.

"I should practice what I preach," says Voris, who is also the cross-country coach at Gruening Middle School in Eagle River, Alaska.

Voris took part in the Race Across America (RAAM), a 2,989-mile cycling competition that takes amateur riders from Portland, Oregon, to Gulf Breeze, Florida. Voris' four-man team, "Team Alaska," finished first in the event's over-50 age group.

"Our goal was to beat the old people from Minnesota," says Voris.

Voris, who has been an active cycler since 1970, has taken part in other long-distance races, including the 746-mile Paris-Brest-Paris race through France and the 373-mile Midnight Sun race that takes competitors from Anchorage to Fairbanks.

Next year, Voris plans to take a break from competing. He'll serve instead on the crew of one of his former teammates who's going solo in the RAAM.

And the future? Voris dreams of completing a cycling trip to just beyond the Arctic Circle in the Canadian Northwest Territories. ✔

More than 'Life's Pretty Parts'

As the 2000 National High School Journalism Teacher of the Year, North Carolina's **Robin Sawyer** will spend much of 2001 meeting important deadlines. But it's her passion for two very important and personal issues—First Amendment rights and the future of scholastic journalism—that will continue to drive her.

In the 1970s, as a high school student working on her own paper, Sawyer, now the journalism advisor at Manteo High, had a number of run-ins with the school principal about free press issues. Those experiences, as well as a deep admiration for her high school journalism teacher, Virginia NEA member Marie Harris, eventually propelled Sawyer into the teaching profession herself.

Today she's confronting free press issues from the teacher side.

"I think some administrators and faculty members would prefer that school newspapers be about nothing more than the pretty parts of life," says the inspirational teacher, who has garnered more than 250 awards for the paper in just 10 years. "But reality isn't pretty. If we are going to teach children that they have a voice, we have to be willing to present their opinions even when we don't necessarily agree with them."

Sawyer will use her new role to bring attention to the "graying" of journalism teachers.

"Journalism teachers prepare students to work as reporters, editors, or graphic artists," she says. "Often we forget that our own profession needs good teachers." ✔

Idaho Statesman

A $24,000 History Lesson

Idaho high school history teacher **Gail Chumbley** doesn't give herself over to many causes, but when she heard about the World War II monument being planned in the the nation's Capital, she threw herself into the cause—and her students went with her.

Over a year's time, Chumbley and her junior history students at Eagle High School in Boise raised over $20,000 to help build the monument. In November, on Veteran's Day, Chumbley was in Washington to turn over part of the funds to former U. S. Senator Bob Dole.

"In the history books, it seems like World War II happened so long ago," says Chumbley. "Many people who were there don't really talk about it. But over the year, the war became extremely real to all of us. Veterans opened up about their experiences, and we were changed in ways I can't even express. It was far better than any civics lesson I could have taught." ✔

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CCNT0201

Getting on the Same Page, Understanding Market Volatility

Q: Please help me find some investments for the money in my savings account. If I don't invest it, my husband will spend it.

A: I received this question a while ago, but I've been sitting on it, saving it for Valentine's Day. Here's why: I have some ideas for investments for a beginning investor. But I believe this couple has a more basic problem: They don't see eye to eye about money. She understands the need for saving for future goals. He spends the money they make as soon as it's available.

Money trips up more marriages than any other issue. More than sex. Yet most couples don't talk about money. They wait until they're past the talking phase. By the time money comes up, they're usually shouting.

Often each spouse has a secret agenda, with plans to carry it out. That's how I see this woman. She plans to force her husband to save because she knows that's what's good for him—and them. So rather than discussing money with him and setting goals, she's going to sneak the money away into a place where it's inaccessible. If he can't see it, he'll never know he had it.

In other instances, I've seen women on the other side of the fence. For instance, women have told me that they hide purchases they make because their husbands would get angry if they knew how much money they spent. Or, they lie to their husbands about how much something cost. Husbands, of course, often do the same thing.

None of these strategies makes for a good relationship, or helps you accomplish your money goals as a family. The best way to do that is to sit down and talk through your financial plan.

Every family should have short-term goals, like buying a house, taking a college course, going on vacation, or remodeling a bathroom, as well as long-term goals like retirement, college education for the kids, maybe starting a business or a second career. These things don't happen by accident. You must plan for them and save money to make them a reality.

I think Valentine's Day is a good time to sit down and make a list of your dreams, even the ones that seem unattainable. Why not have each partner list their top three dreams. Then go out for a Valentine's dinner and talk them over.

Q: What is beta?

A: That's a question I haven't heard for a while, and it shows that someone is getting serious about learning the terminology of investing. Beta is one of the tools of modern portfolio theory. It measures the risk or the volatility of a stock or mutual fund relative to the market as measured by the Standard & Poor's 500 stock index.

The S&P 500 is assigned a beta of 1.0. So a stock or fund with a beta of 1.5 would be 50 percent more volatile than the market. That means you could expect it to go up 50 percent more when the market goes up and down 50 percent more when the market goes down.

Likewise, a fund with a beta of .75 is less volatile than the market. In an up market, you can expect this stock to gain 25 percent less than the overall market. In a down market, it'll lose 25 percent less.

Betas go in and out of favor. They are certainly not the key factor when choosing a stock or mutual fund. But betas can be an interesting piece of information for those thinking about how to measure investment risk.

Q: My husband and I have written wills. Still, if something happened to either of us, I'm not sure we'd know where to find all our papers.

A: I'll bet most of us share those kinds of thoughts. My husband and I have wills, too. But if someone had to come in and dig out all of our papers to execute our wills, it would be a tough job.

Writing a will is an important first step, one that too many people fail to make. Yet, as you suggest, it's not enough. Each of us must also put together a list or a letter to the executor of the will that details where to find important documents.

This list would include insurance policies, bank accounts, stock brokerage accounts, house deeds, and mortgages, as well as personal papers like birth, marriage, and divorce certificates.

There are books and software products that are very helpful with this chore. One of them is the Beneficiary Book at www.beneficiarybook.com. The book looks intimidating at first. You're asked to list everything, including your doctor, your dentist, and your vet.

But I'll bet it's a good feeling to get all that housekeeping done. And it could save someone a lot of distress in any number of situations.

—Mary Rowland

Rowland is a contributor to several financial publications.

Thrifty Educator

This month's tips come from Erin Conley, a second grade inclusion teacher at Perry Elementary School in Perry, Ohio, and Merg Thompson, a fifth grade teacher at El Roble Elementary School in Gilroy, California.

Conley: "I add a blank tape to my list of supplies that students should bring in at the beginning of the year. The students and I use a digital camera to take pictures of classroom activities all year. We use Photo Studio software to download the pictures to videotape. Our year ends with a class movie night. Parents and students come view our class memory tape. Everyone enjoys the tape tremendously. I make individual copies on the blank tapes students brought in, so all students have their own copies. It is a wonderful and very inexpensive way to capture and celebrate student accomplishments."

Thompson: "I ask my students to bring in five self-addressed stamped envelopes. These envelopes make it so easy to communicate with parents that I do it more often. The parental response has been outstanding! I truly believe this turnout is because I send home personal communication. Plus, it's not on my stamp!"

If you have a favorite money-saving tip that you apply in your workplace, please send your idea along to neatoday@nea.org.

Steven Parrish

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A toll-free service at 1-800-YOUR MAG is available 24 hours a day to answer NEA member questions and to place orders. Members can also place orders online at www.neamb.com in the Special Discount Programs section of the NEA Member Benefits Web site.

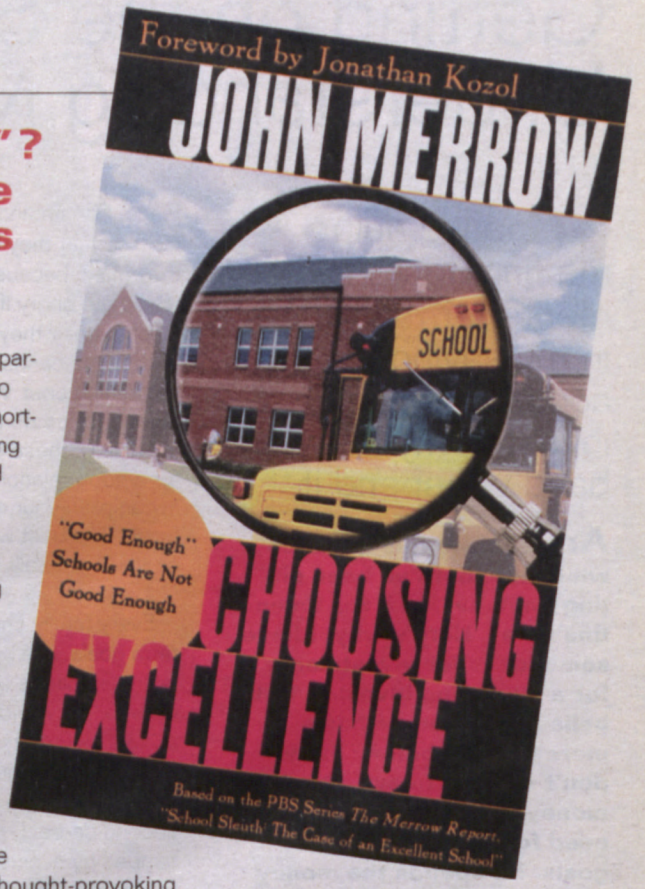
Member education guidebooks, including background information on the most recent set of federal tax law changes, are now available online via the NEA Member Benefits Web site.

Understanding the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 can be found under the "Life Planning" section of the Web site at www.neamb.com. This guide offers taxpayer information based on member profiles in three age brackets: 21 to 35, 36 to 49, and 50 and over.

Information on the Education IRA, Lifetime Learning Credit, and HOPE Scholarship Credit is also covered in these guides.

Beyond 'Good Enough'

Are "good enough" schools really "good"? A veteran education journalist probes the issues affecting schools today, and offers ideas for going beyond the status quo.


Foreword by Jonathan Kozol
JOHN MERROW
SCHOOL
"Good Enough" Schools Are Not Good Enough
CHOOSING EXCELLENCE
Based on the PBS Series The Merrow Report, "School Sleuth: The Case of an Excellent School"

CHOOSING EXCELLENCE
By **John Merrow**
Scarecrow Press, ($15.95 book only; $29.95 book and tape) call 800/263-7769

In the movie *Jerry Maguire*, the famed sports agent played by Tom Cruise stays up all night to write a "mission statement" based on his experiences in the business. Likewise, education reporter John Merrow—on the occasion of his 25-year anniversary as an award-winning education reporter—cranked out what he calls a "whimsical memo" of his own arguments and strategies for improving public education.

Eventually, the memo grew into a television program called "School Sleuth," which aired last November on PBS. And his musings also resulted in this new book, *Choosing Excellence*.

In both, Merrow—known best for his work on PBS's *MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour* and *The Merrow Report*—examines why too many schools in America are just "good enough," a term he uses to describe schools that are neither excellent nor bad, but the ones that we accept even though we know that our children deserve better.

Using keen observation skills honed from more than two decades in the field, Merrow succinctly captures a wide range of issues affecting the social and academic climate of schools today, including high-stakes testing, technology, school safety, charter schools, zero-tolerance policies, the growing and alarming number of children diagnosed with attention deficit disorder, and more.

Always spirited and sometimes edgy, his points are fueled by stirring and sometimes heartbreaking stories of real teachers and children he's met over the years. Add to that expert testimony from education leaders and meticulous, current research that's anything but boring and the result is a thought-provoking call for change.

At times, the book reads like a fast-moving education debate that Merrow is moderating on television. When he presents two views on the merits of alternative certification, for example, he effectively juxtaposes quotes from Stanford University's Linda Darling-Hammond and Chester Finn, an assistant secretary of education under Ronald Reagan.

In fact, his use of quotes throughout the book from noted educators—including Lisa Delpit, author of *Other People's Children;* E.D. Hirsch, Jr., the founder of the Core Knowledge school reform program; and Deborah Meier, vice-chair of the Coalition of Essential Schools—transports the reader into a seemingly real roundtable discussion among some of this country's most respected education experts.

Merrow also uses powerful yet simple metaphors to drive his themes home, comparing current efforts to "fix" the teacher shortage to fixing a leaking swimming pool, and contrasting charter school choice to select-ing a restaurant. This refreshing style makes Merrow's points easy to understand, even for the education jargon-impaired.

Perhaps the most unique and useful aspect of the book is the list of thought-provoking questions posed at the end of each chapter to help concerned educators and parents explore current behaviors and strategies at their schools.

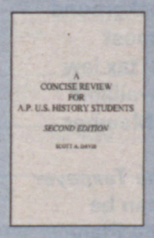
If asked and answered honestly, these questions will help readers uncover the real policies and practices in place at their local school or district.

The book provides a brutally honest portrayal of education today. It's almost a comprehensive guide on how to think about schools: a unique combination of up-to-date facts, researched opinion, practical tips, and critical evaluation questions that will prove useful to parents, educators, and others determined to push and pull the system beyond "good enough." ✔

EXCERPT

"We desperately need to get beyond all the talk about education that claims to be 'standards-based, brain-based, child-centered, site-centered, teacher-tested, results-oriented, business-backed, community-based, teacher-proof, gender-neutral, Web-based, and family friendly.' My eyes glaze over when I hear any of those expressions … hackneyed expressions create a fog around the enterprise and keep us from having honest discussions about the goals of schooling."

BOOKS by NEA Members



A Concise Review for AP U.S. History Students

By Scott Davis
Focused and to the point, this guide offers students a rundown on many of the key facts tested on the AP U.S. History exam. Covering the Colonies to modern court cases, *A Concise Review* sums up themes, names, and dates that will help students tackle the test. $3.50 (minimum order of 10 copies) plus $3.00 s&h from Scott Davis, 1504 Alamo Ave., Colorado Springs, CO 80907, 719/473-9474.

Memorize in Minutes: The Times Tables

By Alan Walker
Using pictures, rhymes, stories, and other activities, Walker harnesses the power of mnemonic devices to help students memorize the multiplication tables. Full lesson plans and teaching tips are provided, along with flashcards, quizzes, and worksheets. $19.99 plus $3.50 s&h from Krimsten Publishing, P.O. Box 48, Prosser, WA 99350. On the Web at www.multiplication.com.

Curtains Up! Theatre Games and Storytelling

By Robert Rubenstein
Rubenstein, a middle school teacher from Eugene, Oregon, loves storytelling so much that he founded the Multicultural Storytelling Festival held annually in Eugene. This book will help students, teachers, and parents develop their abilities in storytelling, improvisation, and public speaking. $17.95 from Fulcrum Publishing, 16100 Table Mountain Pkwy., Suite 300, Golden, CO, 800/992-2908.

Gorillas

By Paul Fleisher
A detailed, 110-page look at one of humanity's closest primate relatives. *Gorillas* includes chapters on the gorilla's evolution, anatomy, life cycle, and intelligence, and the threats to its continued survival as a species. It also features numerous color photographs showing the animals in their native habitat. $19.95 through Marshall Cavendish, 99 White Plains Rd., Tarrytown, NY 10591, 800/821-9881. On the Web at www.marshallcavendish.com.

FREE OR INEXPENSIVE

Unconventional Thinking

Would you like to help students do more thinking "out-of-the-box"? *How to Think Like Einstein: Simple Ways to Break the Rules and Discover Your Hidden Genius* can help. This new book is a collection of original ideas on how to solve problems thinking unconventionally. Some of the more interesting examples: thinking like a bug, pretending you're Cleopatra negotiating your next raise with Julius Caesar, or imagining the dilemmas of invisibility. 232 pp., $16.95 from Sourcebooks, Inc. To order, call 630/-961-3900.

Division Diversion

Teach your students basic math skills—and help them have fun at the same time. *Math Crossword Puzzles* offers children ages 7 to 11 practice in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. The book increases in complexity as it moves along, with the last section combining all four processes. Includes 50 puzzles plus answer key. Available from 1st Books Library, www.1stbooks.com.

Improving Teacher Quality

How Teaching Matters: Bringing the Classroom Back Into Discussions of Teacher Quality is a Policy Information Center Report examining how teacher education and experience, classroom practice, and professional development all impact on how well students perform academically. 36 pp., $10.50 from the Policy Information Center. To order, call 609/734-5694, or download copies from www.ets.org/research/pic.

Technology in the Classroom

The Scholastic Technology Guide: The Complete Technology Buyer's Guide for K-12 Educators is an up-to-date guide to educational technology products, services, and resources for the classroom. This new guide includes more than 3,500 listings divided into five sections: educational software, teacher software, administrative software, hardware, and Internet and telecommunications. Also included: a glossary and events calendar. 210 pp., $19.95 from www.scholastictechguide.com.

Labor Songs

The songs of freedom echo through *Workers Rise*, the new CD produced by one of the labor movement's finest singing groups, the New York City Labor Chorus. Made up of dedicated volunteers—including educators—from local unions throughout the New York City metropolitan area, the CD features songs that range from civil rights movement classics to modern union anthems. $15, plus $3 s&h. Order from the New York City Labor Chorus, c/o Fund for Labor Education, 2109 Broadway, Suite 206, New York, NY 10023. For more info, call 212/595-6600.

Economic Reality

Why do some people earn or have so much more than others? That's just one of the provocative questions tackled in *Teaching Economics As If People Mattered*, an innovative new economics curriculum for high school students written last year by NEA activist Tamara Sober Giecek from Virginia. This new resource includes 21 detailed lesson plans that encourage active student participation. $15, plus $3 s&h. To order your copy, check www.ufenet.org.

Girl of the Shining Mountains: Sacagawea's Story

By Peter and Connie Roop

Experience a different perspective on the Lewis and Clark expedition through the eyes of their guide, Sacagawea. Written in narrative form, this book recounts the life of the young woman, from her kidnapping to her journey with the famous explorers. $14.99 from Hyperion Books for Children, 77 West 66th, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10023, 212/456-0159.

NEW from the NEA Professional Library

The Best of Works4Me: Winning Tips from Classroom Teachers
56 pp., $4.50, #2161-4-00-FN

Now, for the first time, a collection of the best tips from Works4Me, the popular weekly NEA E-mail newsletter! You'll be inspired by the more than 85 practical tips in this newest addition to the NEA Professional Library's Checklist series, with ideas on everything from helping absent students catch up to reinforcing writing skills. Written by the experts—classroom teachers—*The Best of Works4Me* is organized around six essential topics: teaching techniques, content, getting organized, managing your classroom, relationships, and using technology. Whether you teach kindergarten or 12th grade, you'll find great ideas here that you can put into practice immediately!

To order, call 800-229-4200, or check the Web at www.nea.org/books.

EXCERPT

Newspaper Test

Several times a year, I buy enough newspapers for my entire class. I draft a test that requires them to use the table of contents in the front of the paper to find the answers quickly. I include questions for everyone: where movies are showing, used cars for sale, exchange rates, the weather, etc. This exercise helps students become familiar with the paper and demonstrate its usefulness.

D. Bruce Denney, social studies teacher
Seymour High School
Seymour, Missouri

TVTIPS

Haven

CBS, February 11 & 14, 9:00–11:00 p.m. ET, check local listings.

This four-hour mini-series tells the story of Ruth Gruber's efforts to bring Jewish refugees to America during World War II. Dismayed that only 1,000 refugees were granted asylum, Gruber worked tirelessly to break down barriers of prejudice: first, among the soldiers who resented the refugees for taking the place of wounded veterans on the ship, then, among the townspeople in New York, where the refugees were isolated at an army base in Oswego. As friendships began to emerge between the new arrivals and the community around them, Gruber tried to persuade the government to admit more refugees, but bigotry and the politics of war hampered her efforts. KIDSNET has produced an online study guide for middle and high school teachers, with original photos, news articles, and government documents from the time. An electronic bulletin board will also be available, and a live Web chat with Gruber, who is now 89 years old, will take place after *Haven* airs. For more information, visit www.cbs.com or www.kidsnet.org. ✔

TV TIPS

Boycott

HBO, February 24, 8:00–10:00 p.m. ET, check local listings.

When Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white bus rider in Montgomery, Alabama, on December 1, 1955, her arrest acted as the catalyst for the Montgomery bus boycott. The boycott and subsequent court battle eventually led the Supreme Court to find the city's bus segregation laws unconstitutional. This film dramatizes the behind-the-scenes crisis management of the 382-day boycott and the rise of one of its organizers, a young minister named Martin Luther King, Jr.

From Swastika to Jim Crow

PBS, February 1, 10:00–11:00 p.m. ET, check local listings.

America may have welcomed Albert Einstein, but other Jewish intellectuals fleeing Hitler in the 1930s found themselves in a nation reeling from the Depression and steeped in anti-Semitic and anti-German attitudes. One place Jewish professors were often welcomed was on the campuses of historically Black colleges in the South. These professors and their students discovered they were linked by a common history of oppression and the knowledge of what it means to be despised and persecuted. A study guide for high school students, information on Jewish immigration and Black colleges, and a virtual experience of German-Jewish immigration are available on the program's Web site at www. pbs.org or www.itvs.org.

Bojangles

Showtime, February 4, 8:00 p.m. ET, check local listings.

Born at the end of the Reconstruction Era, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson rose from dancing on the streets for pennies to become the most highly paid Black entertainer of his time. Starring Gregory Hines, this biography chronicles the life of an artist whose success was tempered by prejudice, racial stereotypes, and challenges in his personal life.

Scientific American Frontier: Wild Places

PBS, February 6, 8:00–9:00 p.m. ET, check local listings.

Host Alan Alda witnesses the critical link between healthy habitats and species survival as he travels around the world to investigate animals facing extinction. Scientists discuss the negative effects of declining biodiversity, and the show also profiles efforts to save Atlantic salmon, the white stork, Mediterranean monk seals, and the animals and habitat of the American prairie.

Roots

Odyssey, February 2001, check local listings.

Odyssey features a slate of programming in honor of Black History Month, including Alex Haley's 1977 groundbreaking mini-series, *Roots*, and the 1993 three-part series, *Queen*. Accompanying these programs is a new poster/study guide for middle and high school social studies teachers. For more information, visit www.kidsnet.org.

Marcus Garvey: Look for Me in the Whirlwind

PBS February 12, 9:00–10:30 p.m. ET, check local listings.

Hoping to promote racial pride and Black empowerment, Marcus Garvey launched the Universal Negro Improvement Association in 1914 in his native Jamaica. Two years later, he traveled to America with the message of self-reliance and nationalism—and fundamentally changed the tenor of race relations. His "Africa for Africans" movement and disdain for integration created hostility among other Black leaders. He died in London in 1940, a broken and largely forgotten man, but his ideas about Black pride found new life during later struggles for African-American equality.

American Masters–Bob Marley: Rebel Music

PBS, February 14, 9:00 p.m. ET, check local listings.

At a time when Jamaican radio was limited to British and American imports, Bob Marley and The Wailers took their music directly to the people and found a devoted audience. Interviews and concert footage chronicle Marley's life and show how he and his music were influenced by Rastafarai, a Black consciousness movement that replaces armed struggle with a spiritual one, and the struggles of oppressed people in Jamaica and abroad.

73 Worlds and Counting

Discovery Channel, February 26, 9:00–10:00 p.m. ET, check local listings.

Many scientists consider moons the most likely place in our solar system to harbor life, and some lunar volcanoes produce the heat necessary for life's creation. This program explores the ecosystems of our solar system's moons—some bigger than Mercury, others smaller than Manhattan. Through actual and computer-generated visuals, the program provides a tour of some of our planets' moons, including the moons of Jupiter and Neptune—Lo, Europa, and Triton.

CNN NEWSROOM

CNN, February, 4:30–5:00 a.m. ET, check local listings.

CNN NEWSROOM profiles Black Entertainment Television founder Robert Johnson and race car driver Harold Martin in this presentation honoring Black History Month. Also featured are Harlem's Apollo Theater and the Freedman's Bureau, formally known as the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, which was established in 1865 and supervised relief activities for African Americans after the Civil War.

Crossing the Bridge

The History Channel, February 24, 8:00 p.m. ET, check local listings.

In 1965, the eyes of the nation watched when police beat and tear-gassed civil rights marchers as they attempted to cross the Edmund Pettis Bridge in Alabama. This program features interviews with those who played key roles in the protest and reveals the behind-the-scenes battle between members of President Johnson's administration who believed Martin Luther King, Jr. was a dangerous subversive and those who demanded the president take a lead in demanding equality for all Americans.

Freedom Song

TNT, February 27, 8:00–10:30 p.m. ET, check local listings.

Based on true stories from the Civil Rights movement, this film recounts the struggle for equality in a Mississippi town through the eyes of an African-American teenager whose relationship with his father is strained by their different reactions to the upheaval around them. The film pays tribute to the grassroots organizers, particularly members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, who risked their lives registering African Americans to vote. Airing with one-year taping rights for educators, a teaching guide is available at www.turnerlearning.com.

KIDSNET, a national resource for children's media in Washington, D. C., provides these listings. For more information, go to www.kidsnet.org.

VIDEO

Tutu and Franklin

The video (VHS, 2 hours) *Tutu and Franklin: A Journey Towards Peace* is available to K–12 schools, nonprofit. or community-based organizations, and individuals for $35 + s&h from Teaching for Change, www.teachingforchange.org (online shopping cart), 800/763-9131. Free teaching guide included. A 25-minute VHS version, with selected thematic clips from the full video, is available for $20. For more information about the film and related projects, visit www.wisdomworks.net.

FREE OR INEXPENSIVE

Fighting Corruption

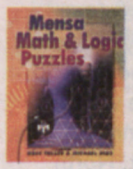
Ever wonder what to do about the problems in your community? The new book, *Citizen Muckraking: How To Investigate and Right Wrongs in Your Community*, from the Center for Public Integrity explains how to fight City Hall and win. Chapter topics include research and investigation into corporations and environmental issues, consumer protection, the Freedom of Information Act, and how to spread the message. 202 pp., $15.95, from Common Courage Media. To order, call 207-525-0900 or visit www.commoncouragepress.com.

Learning How We Learn

Successful teaching involves understanding how learning occurs and how it differs in individuals. *So Each May Learn: Integrating Learning Styles and Multiple Intelligences* integrates the learning style theories based on Jungian typology and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator with Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences. Combining both approaches, the authors show how to implement a holistic learning program into classroom instruction, curriculum, and assessment. Examples, activities, lesson plan templates, and a test to determine intelligence style are included. 124 pp., $21.95 from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Order from www.ascd.org or call 1-800-933-2723.

Picture Perfect Patterns

Pattern Fish teaches the underlying patterns in all areas of life from math and music to science and song through this whimsical underwater journey of rhyming words and humorous illustrations. It ends in a summary of the patterns with a treasure hunt to test your pattern picking perceptions. Available from the Millbrook Press, Inc., www.millbrookpress.com.



Mensan Mind Games

Take your mind on a challenging journey through numbers and patterns with *Mensa Math & Logic Puzzles*. Using dominoes, worms, and rain clouds as themes and cross sums and square numbers, these exercises provide a brain workout suitable for any Mensan or Mensa-wannabee. 96 pp., $7.95 from Sterling Publishing Company, Inc. To order, call 1-800-367-9692, or visit www.sterlingpub.com.

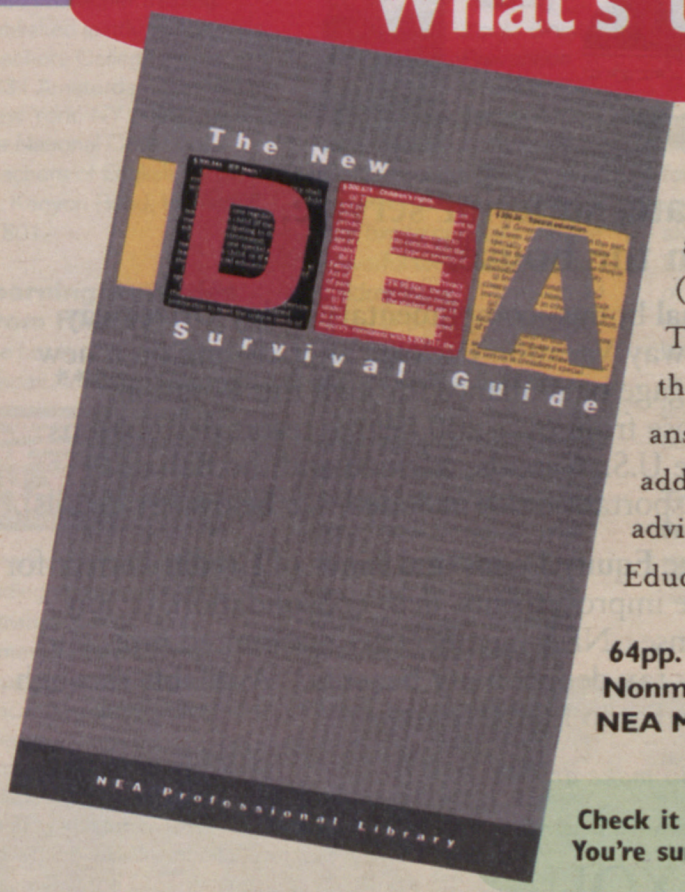
Your Backyard as Your Classroom

Gifted & Talented, Backyard Science Experiments is an activity book of simple science experiments kids ages six to eight can perform with materials found around the house, in the backyard, or in a field. The experiments involve biology, chemistry, and physics, and include such activities as making a hygrometer out of human hair, exploring how a shadow changes throughout the day, and making a magnifying lens out of water. Each activity explains what is needed, what to do, and what happened; suggests activities for further exploration, and provides questions for understanding the basic scientific concepts. 64 pp., $5.95 from Lowell House, 4255 West Touhy Avenue, Lincolnwood, IL 60712.

Daily Discovery

365 Simple Science Experiments with Everyday Materials, plans an entire year of daily science exploration. The book is divided into sections that cover projects that explore the earth's forces, including weather and chemistry projects. Each experiment explains what is needed,

What's the big IDEA?



That's just what thousands of classroom teachers have asked since the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was introduced in 1997. Now, help is finally here! The NEA Professional Library's *The New IDEA Survival Guide* is the book you've been waiting for. The easy question and answer format leads you through a number of scenarios to address your most pressing concerns. You'll get practical advice on dealing with discipline, developing Individualized Education Programs and much, much more.

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To order by phone, call **800-229-4200**.

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what to do, what happens, and why. Liberal, lighthearted illustrations throughout aid in understanding. 320 pp., $12.95 from Sterling Publishing Company, Inc. To order, call 1-800-367-9692, or visit www.sterlingpub.com.

Show Your Friends You Care

Help your children show their appreciation for friends and family through arts and crafts. *50 Nifty Super More Friendship Crafts* shows kids ages 8 to 12 how to create lots of personalized gifts. Each project comes with a "what you'll need" list, simple instructions and illustrations, an indication of difficulty level, and recommendations for adult supervision when needed. Examples include hair jewels, party pinatas, and three-level lava lamps. 80 pp., $6.95 from Lowell House, 4255 West Touhy Avenue, Lincolnwood, IL 60712, 1-800-323-4900.

Crafty Cards To Show You Really Do Care

The Card Shop: A Dazzling Collection of Handmade Paper Greetings, shows you how to personalize your cards and other paper items. The more than 40 fun projects include easy instructions, full-size patterns, and color photographs. The projects are divided into seasons, and an introductory section provides the background needed for projects from Easter bunny cards and birthday cupcake cards to party invitations and Christmas cards that double as tree ornaments. 128 pp., $17.95 from Contemporary Books, 4255 West Touhy Avenue, Lincolnwood, IL 60712, 847-679-5500.

Dive with The Shark Lady

Share the adventurous life of an award-winning ichthyologist, diver, writer, and

teacher Eugenie Clark in the biography *Adventures of a Shark Scientist.* Eugenie Clark discovered her passion for the ocean and marine life at the age of nine after visiting the New York Aquarium and then receiving a fish tank as a gift from her mother. She became "the shark lady," America's Jacques Cousteau, and a leading authority on venomus and poisonous fish from around the world. 107pp., from Linnet Books, 2 Linsley Street, North Haven, CN 06473.

Venus Flytraps and Other Gardening Mysteries

Children from grades three through six can have fun learning nearly everything there is to know about plants and gardening in the

exciting and easy-to-read *Unearthing Garden Mysteries: Experiments for Kids.* Over 20 classroom-tested projects with ample color photos, materials lists, and thorough instructions guide children in planting a garden and discovering its ecosystem. Projects include building a floatarium, growing and pressing flowers, and growing the exotic Venus Flytrap. A glossary and a suggested reading list are included. 90 pp., $17.95. Available from Fulcrum Publishing at 1/800-992-2908 or www.fulcrum-resources.com.

How the City Works

Engineering the City: How Infra-structure Works: Projects and Principles for Beginners is a

book that takes the mystery out of how cities receive gas, water, and electricity, and how these resources and waste by-products are transported to specific locations. Children ages nine and up learn that infrastructure, or how a city works, involves everything from bridges, trucks, and trains to hydroelectric power plants, power lines, plumbing, and fuel. Chapters include illustrations and cover the history of infrastructures beginning with prehistoric communities through the Roman Empire, the chemical and engineering sciences behind these developments, and concluding remarks on pollution and

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Branches: Enter DM# DMC0063299V in LIS. Refer to Affinity Programs At-A-Glance for additional details.

EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

HFNT0201

the future of infrastructure. 136 pp., from Chicago Review Press. To order call 1/800/888-4741 or visit www.ipgbook.com.

New Perspectives for Teaching Literature

Critical Encounters in High School English: Teaching Literary Theory to Adolescents premises that teaching high school students critical literary theory will expand their perspectives on vital cultural issues. By incorporating contemporary feminist literary theory on the classic literature of Shakespeare and Marx, for example, students learn the motivations and meanings behind the characters and story that otherwise remain hidden. The result of this teaching model is greater intellectual flexibility for interpreting modern cultural texts. The lessons include teaching strategies and ready-to-use handouts the author has successfully used in teacher training. Published jointly by the Teachers College Press, 1234 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10027, and the National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801.

Learning Activities From History

The book, *A Kid's Guide to African American History,*

designed for ages 6 to 11, brings African-American history to life by guiding children in hands-on activities, songs, and games, while providing inspiring stories of great African-American artists, inventors, and heroes. The games and projects, which include making paper dolls, creating kufi for Kwanzaa, and writing a Brer Rabbit tale, reveal the experiences and activities shared by many generations of African-Americans. The history sections include many overlooked and unknown facets of American history, such as the African-Americans who lived in Jamestown, Virginia, before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock. 242 pp., $14.95, from Chicago Review Press. To order call 1-800-888-4741 or visit www.ipgbook.com.

Unlock the Secrets of the Past

The Young Oxford Book of Archaeology is a comprehensive introduction to the methods and specialties used by archaeologists on over a dozen sites throughout history. The lives and times of our ancient ancestors come alive in this richly

photo-illustrated book that answers questions about religious beliefs, customs, tools, architecture, and more. Trace the eras from mammoth-bone houses in France to Vikings in North America. 160 pp., $16.95. Available from Oxford University Press, 198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016 and www.oup.com.

Youth Crime Prevention Techniques

Stories from Then and Now: Teaching Youth Crime Prevention through Traditional Folktales, Contemporary Stories, and Activities provides stories that excite curiosity and are powerful tools for teaching children ages 11 through 14 about important emotional and social issues. Borrowing stories from around the world, the book helps children recognize their choices and the consequences of those choices, so they can adopt positive values and take a responsible role in deciding their future. The illustrations and lessons impart practical skills for coping with anger, listening carefully, following instructions, and showing respect for other people and their differences. 42pp. To order call the National Crime Prevention Council at 202/466-6272, or visit www.ncpc.org.

An Educated Ear

Overcoming Teen Depression: A Guide for Parents provides parents, teachers, and others an overview of the topic and information on how it can be overcome. $16.95 plus s&h. Call 800/387-5085.

DIVERSITY Calendar

March

March is Women's History Month

In 1981 Congress proclaimed the week of March 8 as National Women's History Week and expanded the celebration to the entire month in 1987. This year's theme is "Celebrating Women of Courage and Vision."

You can celebrate Women's History Month in the classroom by taking advantage of the many resources, photos, posters, etc. that are offered by the National Women's History Project. Founded in 1980, the National Women's History Project is a nonprofit educational organization committed to recognizing and celebrating the diverse and significant historical accomplishments of women. The Project's Web site—http://www.nwhp.org—contains an online catalog of books in categories such as the Women's Rights Movement, Quick Start Teaching Kits, Intimate Portraits, World History, U.S. History, Sports, and others. Obtain an exclusive collection of 48 photographs with biographies to display in your classroom, featuring strong dedicated women like First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, Nobel Peace Prize winner Jane Addams, Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, and environmentalist Rachel Carson. You can also obtain the official commemorative 2001 poster "Celebrating Women of Courage and Vision."

"The Learning Place" on the site contains links to women's history resource sites in categories such as Politics, Art and Music, Aviation, Math and Science, African-American Women, and others.

Contact the National Women's History Project at 7738 Bell Road, Windsor, CA 95492, phone 707/838-6000, fax 707/838-0478, or E-mail at nwhp@aol.com.

WEB WINNERS

Liberal Arts Resources

The University of Virginia's Center for Liberal Arts Web site offers a central location for teachers of liberal arts to update and enhance their skills in this broad area. Sections include a calendar of events, background information on the center, a listing of programs by discipline, and a resources section. www.virginia.edu/~libarts/home.html.

Travel the World with Hemingway

Michael Palin and PBS team up again to offer another world adventure—this time on the Web—that focuses on Ernest Hemingway, his life, and his travels. The Web site combines the general info on PBS resources and links to related sites with suggestions for integrating Hemingway's life into classroom lessons. www.pbs.org/hemingwayadventure/.

Immigration Issues

Another PBS site, the New Americans, explores the history of immigration in America. The New Americans tells individual stories, examines immigration past and present, and includes a teacher guide with lesson plan. www.pbs.org/newamericans.

African Americans in 1800s America

This Web site is an excellent resource for information on African Americans in 19th century America. Search by topic or key words to find images on all aspects of life in this eventful period of American history. http://digital.nypl.org/schomburg/images_aa19.

Poets Pages

Poets.org is a multimedia source for everything you want to know about American poets. Read, listen to, and discuss poems; attend an event; and find poetry journals, organizations, and awards—it's all here. www.poets.org/index.cfm.

On Board the Bard's Bus

This Web site, sporting a bright orange school bus, introduces you to the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.'s huge library and research center on English literature's most famous poet. The site includes information on the library and the National Endowment for the Humanities, as well as lesson plans for teaching Shakespeare to kindergarten through 12th grades, festivals and workshops, and links to more Shakespearean resources. www. folger.edu/education.

Sea Studies

This whimsical Web site uses resources such as books, games and puzzles, writing activities, ocean art activities, lesson plans, and other sea links to teach elementary schoolchildren about the ocean and marine life. www.fi.edu/fellows/fellow8/dec98/main.html.

Women of the West

Experience what it was like to be a woman in the West with this Web site from the Women of the West Museum. Read nine narratives of women in the Story Quilt section, find out about museum programs, and experience the time period through images in the Gallery. www.wowmuseum.org.

in the Light Lane

Just Following Directions

After 30 years of teaching and giving many multiple-choice tests, I've had a first this week. While grading a multiple-choice test, I noticed one of my sixth graders had marked several correct answers and then erased them and marked the wrong answers.

I took the student aside and asked why he changed all his correct answers.

"I read the directions and it said to mark the letter *before* the correct answer."

Maybe my directions should have said to mark the letter *in front of* the correct answer!

Georgianna Morrison
Columbus, Indiana

This brilliant observation, made during a discussion in my middle school social studies class, cracked me up.

We were discussing Roman emperors. I mentioned that Caligula had once asked the Roman senate to elect his favorite horse as a consul of Rome. One seventh grader remarked that he thought that having a horse for a leader might be pretty cool.

"That won't work," another student said. "Nothing would ever get done." And why not?

"No laws would ever be passed," the student explained, "because the horse would only vote nay. You know, neigh?"

John Kaale
Indianola, Iowa

I was passing out study guides to my sophomore English class. When I handed one to a young man in the front seat, he told me that he could not take one. When I asked him why, he told me that he doesn't accept handouts!

Joyce Lovas
Barberton, Ohio

I was introducing myself as the substitute in a third-grade class, and mentioned that I had a baby granddaughter.

I was flattered when a student said, "You don't look old enough to be a grandmother."

The deflation came during a social studies unit on Washington, D.C., when I mentioned that I had been born there. The same student raised his hand and asked, "Were you there when James Madison rebuilt the White House?"

Laura Foote
Wheeling, Illinois

I am retired, but I'd like to send along several remembrances from my years in the classroom.

During recess, one of my students ran up to give my middle a big hug. She gushed on about how wonderful I was. Then the final compliment: "And you are fat just like my mother!"

And one more:

My multilanguage students were learning English as well as the usual lessons. Part of my plan was to have them use their vocabulary words in sentences of their own. This gave them practice with their handwriting skills, as well as their skill in use of the English language.

One word from their reading was spaniel. One student wrote, "I speak Spaniel."

Marjorie Sherrill
Pacific Grove, California

As a special education teacher, I would usually start the morning with general knowledge "questions of the day." Students loved this activity because if they got the answer right, they got a small tootsie roll.

One day my question was, "Who knows who invented the first airplane?"

Everyone looked at me with blank stares. Slowly one of my fourth graders raised his hand. "I think I know, Mrs. Fagerman. Was it the Wrong Brothers?"

Marlene Fagerman
Flint, Michigan

On a field trip to a natural science museum, our group of second graders toured the exhibits, discussing what we saw with the wonderful guide.

As we neared a brand new model of an herbivore dinosaur, the guide explained to the children that this dinosaur was a "weed-eater."

One little girl proudly piped up, "My daddy uses one of those every week when he mows the yard!"

Karen Pollard
Owensboro, Kentucky

My first-grade class has been learning how to count money, starting with pennies. I was going to show the students two different ways to write money, so I first put a cents sign on the board and asked what it meant.

Everyone quickly responded, "A cents sign!" I then put a dollar sign on the board and asked if anyone knew what it meant. There was a slight hesitation, then suddenly one little girl raised her hand and confidently responded, "It means you're *rich*!"

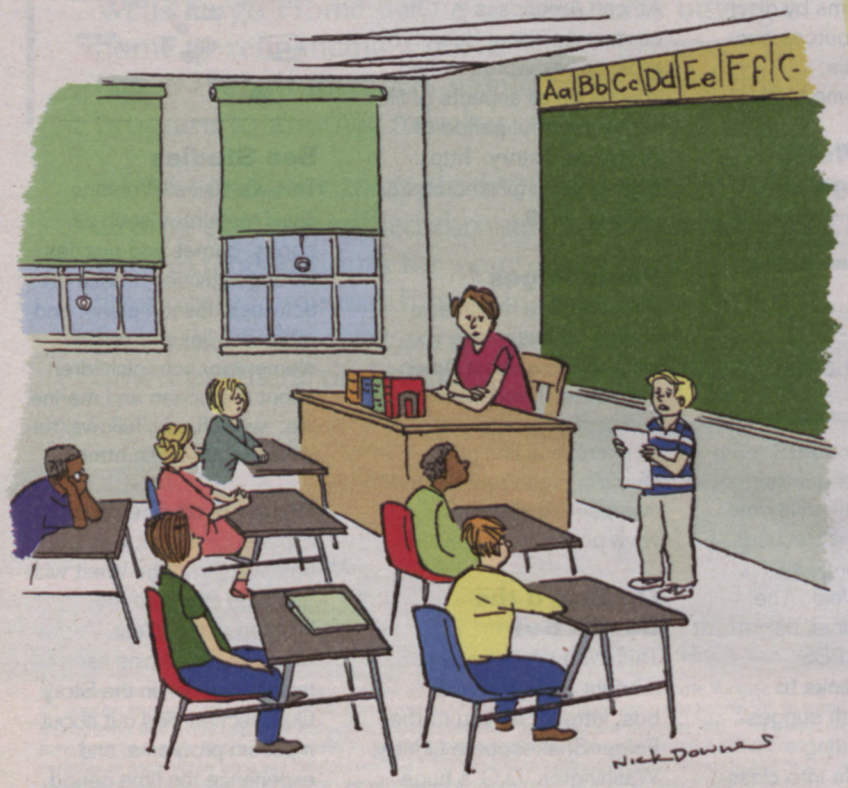
Patti Sabo
Albuquerque, New Mexico

In art class, I was showing students how to draw portraits using a pencil. Impressed, one fourth-grade girl asked, "Mr. Lee, how come you draw so good?"

"Because I have a bachelor's degree in art education," I answered.

"So when do you get a 'married' degree?" she asked in reply.

Abraham Lee
Des Plaines, Illinois



"What I did on my two-week suspension."

The Digital Age

My math class was doing a unit on reading electric meters. Some students had trouble reading the dials.

I asked the school janitor where the electric meter for the school was, so I could take my class down and show this meter's dials to them. I had each student take a paper and pencil to document the dial reading for a quiz grade.

The students approached the meter, then were surprised to find that the meter sported a digital readout!

Greta Morris
Rutland, Massachusetts

We were working on column addition, and I wrote four numbers in a vertical column and asked where I should put the plus sign.

One of the girls raised her hand and said, "Put it next to the last dead-end"—not addend.

Linda Vitale
Murrysville, Pennsylvania

A colleague of mine, a kindergarten teacher, was completing her report card assessment, so she allowed the students to watch an alphabets and numbers tape by Sesame Street.

The teacher, Mrs. Lucas, paused the tape and went to the TV where she pointed to the Cookie Monster and asked if anyone knew who he was.

Several students raised their hands. Mrs. Lucas called on a little boy, who replied, "I know who that is—it's Elmo—he just changed suits and clothes."

Ursula McDonald
Brighton, Alabama

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And when they heart began to beat, What dread hand? and what dread feet?

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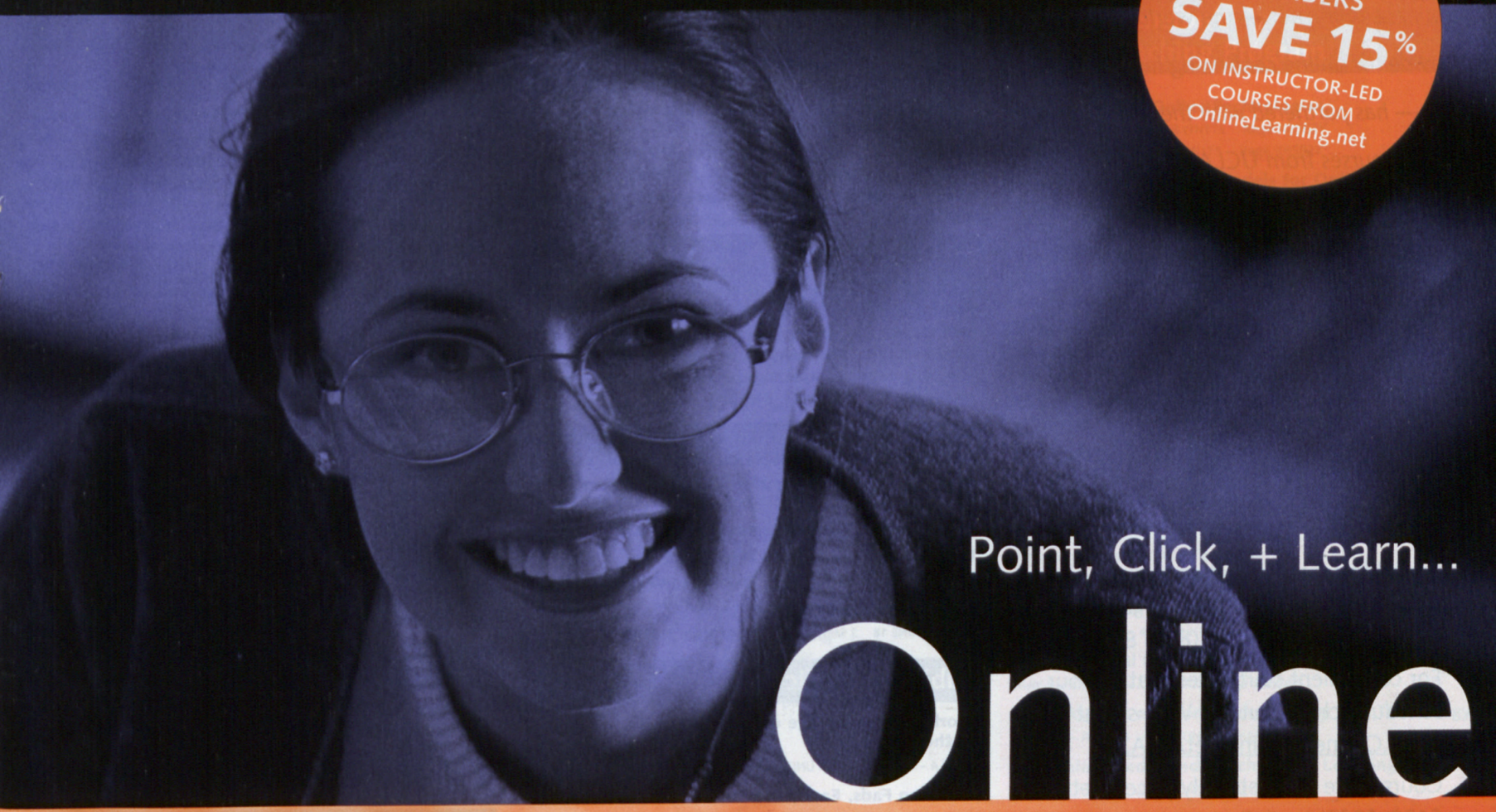

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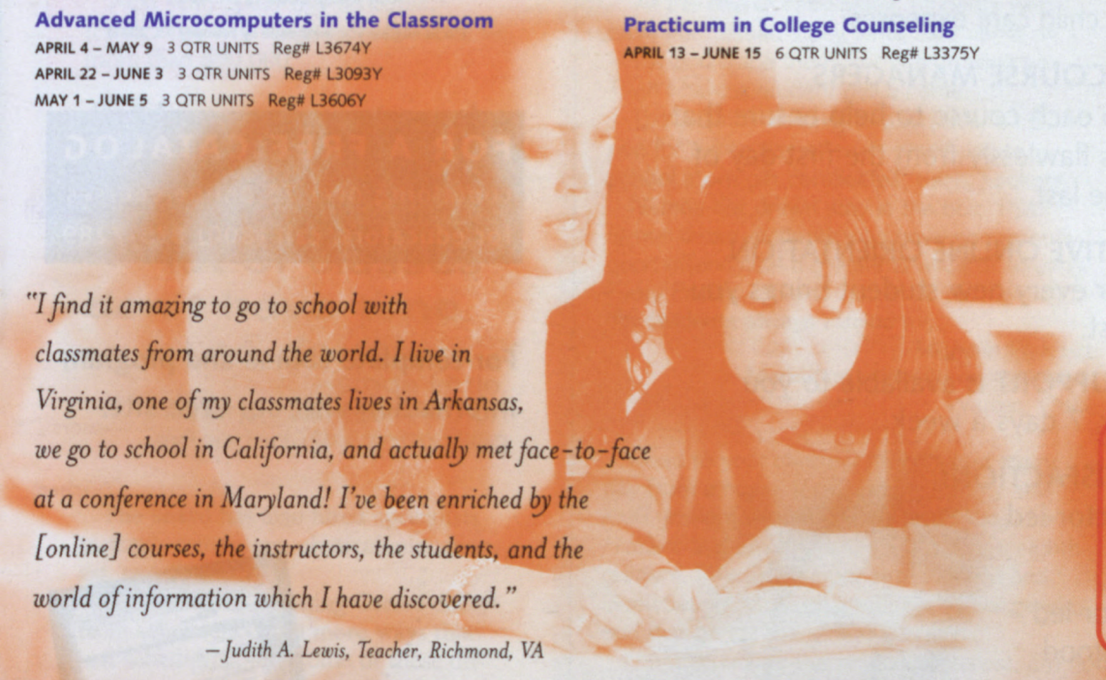

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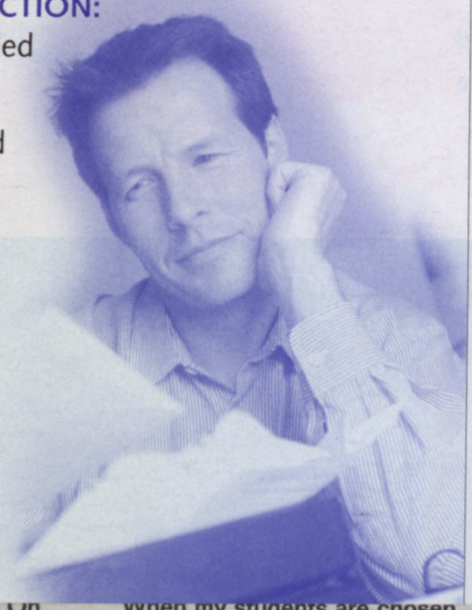

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